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HAYM SALOMON
AND
THE REVOLUTION

Isaac Solomon

HAYM SALOMON
AND
THE REVOLUTION

By Charles Edward Russell

COSMOPOLITAN BOOK CORPORATION
Publishers, NEW YORK, MCMXXX

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FIRST EDITION

PRINTED IN THE U. S. A. BY
J. J. LITTLE & IVES CO., NEW YORK

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Prefatory Note

CONCERNING this singular and neglected figure in the American Revolutionary story, the most profitable source of information is the still unpublished Diary that Robert Morris kept throughout the period of his service as Superintendent of Finance for the young United States. The entries begin May 11, 1781, the day he took office, and continue until he was superseded by a commission of the treasury. Seventy-five of the notations refer to the part Haym Salomon took in the nation's most acute financial crises, and, while they are curt and businesslike, sufficiently indicate the value of his services and something of the character of the man.

When he came into the troubled drama he was a broker in Philadelphia, the trusted agent of the French embassy and French military establishment, and although but three years in the city already become distinguished for business success and probity. On brokers, Morris was peculiarly dependent. It was through them alone that he could sell the bills of exchange by which he was able to keep the national finances from ruin, but one may surmise from certain entries in the Diary that at first he preferred brokers of his own religious faith and turned to a Jew only when obliged to do so. References to Salomon are at the start few and formal, but they curiously

increase in frequency and the respectful terms in which they are couched until at last Salomon appears daily and has manifestly become the confidant and close adviser of the Superintendent, who was in reality the nation's first Secretary of the Treasury. When Morris has a confidential message to send to New York it is by Salomon that he sends it; whenever he is in difficulties he turns to Salomon.

The Diary is now in the Library of Congress,[1] with Morris's letter books, which, however, yield little to the investigator.

The services that Salomon performed to his adopted country, though great and valuable, were never spectacular and went unknown by the public. It was a time when the military genius held the center of the stage. Everything seemed to be done by fighting and no one stopped to bother about the men that behind the scenes toiled to get the money whereby the fighting was possible. Even the desperate straits of the revenues and the treasury by which repeatedly the whole Revolution seemed doomed to collapse, even such terrifying days as those of August, 1781, and of August, 1782, came and passed without public attention. The war was being won; men supposed it was being won solely on the battle-field, whereas in truth the soldier on the battle-field fought only upon the dollar in the treasury.

An odd fact made clear by the Diary and little noted elsewhere is that the strain on the exchequer became greatest and most hazardous after the battle of Yorktown, which we are accustomed to regard as

[1] Manuscript division.

the end of the conflict. Between the surrender of Cornwallis and the negotiations for peace was a long lapse in which it seemed that the war was certain to go on. The whole military establishment must be maintained at its utmost efficiency and cost, and just at that time all the slender, uncertain sources of revenue seemed to go dry. It was then that Haym Salomon crowned his patient zeal for the Revolution by providing it many times with the means by which it could march onward.

A few men in official life, knowing well what he had done and the compass of his unselfish devotion, gave him honor. Many years after his death the story came to the attention of Jared Sparks, the most industrious and, on the whole, one of the most useful of the writers about the Revolutionary period. In 1841 he was lecturing in New York on his favorite topics, and in the audience was the son of the man that in those perilous years had so loyally sustained Morris and all his toppling finances. Upon this hearer the lecture naturally made a deep impression. Haym M. Salomon was his name. He wrote to Sparks and finally met him, when the whole Salomon story was discussed. Sparks was greatly interested. We have evidence that he was already aware of the outlines of this chapter of national finance, for about that time he talked of it with Joshua Cohen of Baltimore and then expressed the opinion that "a great part of the success Robert Morris attained in financing the Revolution was due to the skill and ability of Haym Salomon." [1] It seems that he asked Mr. Haym M.

[1] Letter from Mr. Cohen to Mr. Sparks, dated October 29, 1865.

Salomon to prepare for him a memorandum narrative of his father's life and that Sparks intended to use this as the basis for a biography.

Unluckily he did not so use it and it lay for more than half a century buried beneath a lifetime's collection of papers and documents. Meanwhile, the story narrowly missed a telling by other hands. Judge Noah, an eminent Jew of New York, had long intended to write a book that should deal justly with the part the Jews played in the American Revolution, including the services of Haym Salomon. Mr. Haym M. Salomon was then alive and could have supplied many documents and much detailed information bearing on his father's life. Judge Noah died before he had well started upon his intended work and the material he had collected was scattered and lost.

When Professor Herbert B. Adams of Johns Hopkins University was preparing his "Life and Writings of Jared Sparks," an invaluable storehouse of knowledge concerning the period of Sparks's career, he was entrusted by survivors of the Sparks family with the papers that Jared Sparks had left, and among them discovered the manuscript that Haym M. Salomon had written so many years before. Unfortunately, it had been mutilated so that important parts were missing but enough remained to supply many details and facts not previously known. It has been of assistance in the compiling of the present volume.

Many other documents that would ordinarily be available in such a work have been lost through a se-

ries of strange accidents or misfortunes. Some are said to have been destroyed when the British burned the Capitol at Washington. Others have been purloined by autograph hunters and the like. But the facts of Haym Salomon's unselfish devotion and timely aid to the country are indisputable and the Morris Diary supplies the essentials of many of these transactions.

Ten times between 1846 and 1925 his career of public service was considered by the Congress of the United States. Six times committees of the House or of the Senate, or both, investigated the story. In the pages that follow is told the remarkable history of the repeated attempts to win some acknowledgment of the nation's debt to this man and the fatality that has foiled all these efforts. But the investigations by the committees turned up many facts about his chanceful life that would otherwise have perished and these are utilized in the present narrative.

The Senate of the Sixty-ninth Congress, 1925, authorized the printing of a public document about the Salomon episode to which Professor Adams contributed a short biographical sketch and Professor J. H. Hollander of Johns Hopkins University an invaluable bibliography. These are most helpful to any one that now seeks to reconstruct the story, and I gratefully acknowledge my indebtedness to them.

Aside from these the available material is meager. We have the certain record that Haym Salomon was inspired by a deep and passionate devotion to the cause of liberty and served it with flawless zeal, even to the giving of his life. But there are no documents

extant that reveal intimately his mental processes nor the details of his daily walk. Facts there are to show clearly that he was generous, kindly, patient, loyal to his religion, loyal to his ideals. These are set forth in this little book. But I have too much respect for his memory and for the worth of biographical art to attempt an imaginary picturing that belongs to fiction and to fiction only.

The part the Jews of America played in the Revolution has had inadequate attention. Mr. Simon Wolf of Washington, the late Rev. Dr. Madison C. Peters, Mr. McCall and others have uttered protests against this injustice, potently calling attention to the facts. I am indebted to these for some of the authorities I have consulted and might otherwise have overlooked.

President Calvin Coolidge in a public address once made this comment:

"The Jews themselves, of whom a considerable number were already scattered throughout the Colonies, were true to the teachings of their own prophets. The Jewish faith is predominantly the faith of liberty. From the beginnings of the conflict between the Colonies and the Mother Country they were overwhelmingly on the side of the rising Revolution."

The righteousness of this comment is illustrated best, it seems to me, in the career of Haym Salomon, unfaltering patriot, wise and modest soldier of liberty, devout Jew. But there remains to be added, in computing the influences that brought about such an unusual example of self-effacing devotion, the hard-

tried Polish spirit of resistance to tyranny and the worth, dignity and moment of the revolt in America. In the midst of an age of detraction it is well to remind ourselves that a man of Haym Salomon's discerning intellect and sure convictions would not have given his all to the American Revolution, or risked his life in its behalf, if it had not in all ways rung true to the universal cause of human liberty of which he was soldier and servant.

To serve such a cause, to fight and struggle for it, to have faith in and for it, to go on undismayed in its apparent defeats and to hold everything else as worth nothing in comparison—there seems to be no better test of the soul of a man and the value of his passage here below. We know from the records how well this man abides all such testing, even though the part he played was necessarily without glory and without the bare knowledge of the generation he served.

HAYM SALOMON
AND
THE REVOLUTION

CHAPTER I

A Feast—and What Came Next

RIGHTLY considered, the starting point of this narrative is an elegant and famous repast.

"Dinner is served, Your Serene Majesties!" says the obsequious butler, who happens on this occasion to be armed to the teeth.

Their Serenities accordingly troop out for it, the Serene Frederick of Prussia, the Serene Maria Theresa of Austria, Catherine of Russia, Most Serene. It is the year 1772; all is well with Their Serenities. In the royal and imperial business of fighting and lying, grabbing and holding, they have prospered. When they have taken their seats at the festive board, the joint is brought in and served to them smoking hot, large, fat, juicy. It should be all of this, for it is nothing less than a third of the ancient Kingdom of Poland.

With joy and a knife they carve it into three unequal parts. Her Serenity of Russia, Catherine, the sweet, the gentle, the diffident, the blushing, is served with the largest and fattest portion [1]; the others fare by no means ill. A pleasant time is had by all; in perfect security. Outside by the gate, a few foolish, unruly persons make objections. The butler (armed

[1] Conf. C. D. Yonge, *Three Centuries of Modern History*, p. 411.

to the teeth) goes out after them. Then peace dwells once more in the royal and imperial precincts.

It is nice and profitable thus to seize and divide other people's property. By such means we build empires and enlarge our happy frontiers. But sometimes the results take on unexpected shapes. For instance, 147 years after the royal and imperial dinner party of 1772, Their Serenities of that day would have been greatly astonished if they could have foreseen what in 1919 was to come of their sociable little carving party of 1772. Results! Sometimes they are obvious and celebrated, and sometimes they are little sounded in the trump of fame. But, generally speaking, from an excursion like this into the joys of pillage one reaction that is reasonably sure makes trouble for oppressors and breeds soldiers for progress. The same dinner party that planted in the Polish heart an inextinguishable passion to be free gave to the freeing of America the swords of Pulaski and Kosciusko and the facile financial genius and dauntless persistence of Haym Salomon.

Historically, the Poles are a great people. In the period of the political eclipse of their country, it was a current fashion to try to erase their extraordinary story and the memory of their surpassing service to western civilization. Even now it is common among us to think of them confusedly with Russians, more rarely with Magyars or other peoples. As a matter of fact they are ethnically and otherwise their own branch of the great Slavic division, a little commingled with other ancients of the forests but still essentially distinct and en-

dowed with a copious rich literature. The fertile but somewhat chilly region into which their fierce-eyed ancestors poured at the southwest corner of Russia, they made first into a dukedom with an elected chief, and at last into a kingdom. What order of spirit was in them was shown early. Whenever their duke showed a disposition to become arrogant or have an excessive ego, they unceremoniously bundled him out and elected another. Seven hundred years ago and less, the Poles were the best soldiers in Europe. Into their hands the remainder of the western world gave the task to keep back the flood of Turks and Mohammedanism and by Polish valor was saved from inundation and black night.

It is necessary to remind ourselves of these things now, or the remarkable story that is to follow will never seem plausible. We have to understand why the Poles looked upon their history with an intensity of pride, why national independence seemed to them the most precious of all human possessions, why they were so passionate about liberty, and why wherever liberty made a stand they felt the urge irresistible to have a place in her ranks.

The service laid upon Poland for the rescue of civilization it performed as wisely as bravely. John Sobieski is almost to be bracketed with Charles Martel. In 1683 the Polish Hammer saved Vienna from imminent capture by the Turks as the Frankish Hammer had saved Paris and London from the Saracens in 732. If once the Turks of that day had won inside the western organization, greatly would all subsequent history have been changed—and infi-

nitely for the worse. The indomitable Polish legion that, being Europe's sword and shield, thrust itself between, came in the nick of time. So far as we can see now, another two days or so and the issue would have been lost.

The Poles had more than courage and skill in arms to be proud of. At one time they were the most learned people in Europe. About the fifteenth century they had outstripped in culture even Italy itself. Their universities, surpassing all others, had become the resort and wonder of the learned world.

Scarcely another passage of history yields to the cynical so rich a morsel as the rest of the Polish story. Again and again on many a hard-fought field, long before Vienna and 1683, the great Polish warriors had saved Austria from annihilation. It was this same Poland that Austria, Prussia and Russia, massing an overwhelming brute power in their combined armies, snatched now from its place in the sun that it might be slain and divided.

Not without opposition. Royal and imperial brutality must still deal with men of Sobieski's heroic mold. Nothing in the long annals of resistance to tyranny glows with more splendor than the great deeds of Kosciusko and the dazzling gallantry of Pulaski. By the sheer force of exaltation, repeatedly they drove before them troops three and four times the numbers of their own slender battalions, and if they could not save Poland they added to its name a new and imperishable glory.

Sometimes a hatred of oppression and an instinctive impulse toward liberty seem so mixed into the

red blood inheritance that they are ready to show forth on any occasion anywhere. It must have been so with the tribe of Salomon. A distinguished Jew, David T. Salomons, in Great Britain, unfalteringly led the fight year after year against that curious relic of barbarism, the civil disability of the Jews. At great personal cost, in the face of prejudice, resentment and clamor, not always in personal safety, he fought on until in July, 1858, by his efforts, the law that for centuries had disgraced the British statute books was swept into the dust heap of jungle-time blunders. Other Jews had shrugged shoulders at the discrimination as no more than a part of the burden of injustice their people were called upon to bear.[1] Some had even bowed to it and accepted its harsh terms. David T. Salomons would neither assent nor bow; he would only fight. There are few better stories—one man defying rock-rooted custom, ancient prejudice, racial hatred, proscription, religious passions, and winning against all.

Centuries before that, the Salomons had dwelt in Portugal.[2] Portuguese Jews and Spanish Jews, by all accounts, long occupied a place of peculiar eminence for learning, piety, wisdom and success. In Portugal they rose to the highest governmental offices. More than one became prime minister, or held station similar in power and responsibility. Others were king's counselors, trusted for judgment and patriotism.

[1] Not in Canada, it may be worth while to note. There the Jews had abolished civil disability long before David T. Salomons began his great fight in England.

[2] Henry S. Morais, "The Jews of Philadelphia," p. 25; Lady Magnis, "Outlines of Jewish History," p. 218.

The world's debt is still greater. In both countries, it was the Jewish element that most encouraged, supported, insisted upon and made possible those daring voyages and explorations that reduced the world unknown to the proportions of certainty, expanded commerce and civilization, and gave to the names of feeble kings and dowdy queens a glory that was not less enduring because it was won without deserving.

In Spain, two Jews were the real authors of the voyage of Columbus and so brought about the discovery of America.

Strange are the vitalities of fabulated history. To this day in our school text-books, or some of them, it is taught that Queen Isabella pawned her crown jewels that she might finance the hardy seaman from Genoa. As a matter of fact, she did nothing of the kind. For one reason, she had no crown jewels to pawn,[1] having pledged them all some time before to carry on one of Europe's idiotic wars. And for another, it was not necessary. A wealthy, wise and benevolent Jew advanced the funds from his private purse.

Santangel was his name, Luis de Santangel. You say it sounds far from Jewish. Right; and the fact brings to mind one of the most interesting features of the story. Santangel is not Jewish and was not this man's real name. He was in fact a *Marano,*[2] or *converso,* which means that when the full tide of

[1] Dr. Meyer Kayserling, *Christopher Columbus and the Participation of the Jews in the Spanish and Portuguese Discoveries;* also Professor Herbert B. Adams.

[2] The word is a corruption of *Marantha,* which means anathema.

persecution fell upon the Jews in Spain and Portugal, many of them, assuming names taken from their oppressors, outwardly conformed to the savage laws about their religious observances. Publicly they professed conversion; secretly they continued in their inherited faith. The fact seems to be well attested that *Maranos* rose to high places even in the church itself; there is, for example, that strange story about an archbishop at Toledo with the Talmud in a niche hidden in his chamber wall and a breviary in his hand. In reality, they had never abjured their own religion. About the middle of the fifteenth century it was declared that one third of the population of Spain consisted of *Maranos,* and it was this fact that drew down anew the savageries of persecution. The *Maranos* were the wealthiest members of each community. If they could be convicted of a secret heresy, all this gold men gabbled of would go to the informers.

It was no visionary peril that led men to compromise with the faith of their fathers. From January to November, 1481, two thousand Jews were burned at the stake in the province of Cadiz and four hundred in Seville.[1]

Yet certain *Maranos* continued to fill controlling places in the government even when their heresies were more than suspected. No one can now believe that this was not with the perfect knowledge and connivance of the rulers. To the state, Jews were indispensable. In the Middle Ages and that part of the world, at least, they seem to have been the only

[1] Lady Magnus, *Outlines of Jewish History,* p. 148.

persons that knew the rudiments of finance or how to steer government without hitting the shoal places. The Nordic notion of governing was always typified with a battle-ax. The Jews knew that nine times in ten the battle-ax was worse than useless.

Aside from this endowment, which, all things considered, was enough to give them a glittering historical singularity, they were likewise about the only persons that meditated upon the physics of the world in which they lived or had competent knowledge of it. Why this should have been seems mysterious but it is quite true. The European of that day, even he that passed for educated, had a mental horizon not much beyond his town, lord's castle, or village back yard. The Jews, possibly because of their ancestral wanderings, though that seems a reason far-fetched, knew there was a world beyond Verona's walls, and queried about it. They were the only map-makers, the only scientific students of geography, navigation and hydrography. When a sea captain contemplated a long voyage, he sought a Jew to tell him where to go and how to get there.

Luis de Santangel, to use his stage name, was comptroller general of Aragon, and another *Marano,* with the stage name of Gabriel Sanchez, was royal treasurer. Between them they saved Columbus from despair and more heart-breakings as a spurned and ridiculed mendicant. Coldly received at the royal court, he was going away with scarcely a hope of better treatment in other countries when Santangel sought an interview with Queen Isabella, showed her the vast possibilities of the enterprise, in which he

had full faith, and induced her to send a messenger hotfoot after Columbus and bring him back.[1]

Then the comptroller general advanced 17,000 florins to his friend Sanchez, the treasurer, and his friend Sanchez, the treasurer, advanced them to Columbus,[2] who was thus enabled to set sail for that New World that he believed to be the Old. Whether Santangel and Sanchez shared this fantastic belief, I know not. It may be that they, too, thought India could be reached by steering due west. At least they knew that Europe was but a patch on the real world and that the time had come to raise the curtain on the rest.

But the Jewish aspect of the whole wonderful story does not end at the counting house. With Columbus on his dash into the dark went Rodrigo Sanchez, a Jew and a cousin of the treasurer. The surgeon and the physician of the cockle-shell fleet were Jews, who almost alone in those days knew something of physiology and medicine as of projection. The sailing was directed upon a map made by a Jew, Jehuda Cresques, of the Portuguese Academy at Sayres. It was the only map Columbus had; without it his voyage, one might believe, would have been impossible. Before he sailed, a Jew presented him with a copy of the astronomical tables prepared by Abraham Zacuto, another Jew. Many of the sailors were Jews. It was a Jew in the ship of Columbus that first sighted land in the New World and another

[1] Justin Winsor, *Christopher Columbus;* also Henry Harrisse quoted by Madison C. Peters, *The Jew as a Patriot,* pp. 37-38.

[2] Dr. Kayserling.

Jew that of all Europeans of whom we have record first set foot upon it.[1]

By some curious dispensation of fate, therefore, the Jews from the beginning have been peculiarly connected with America.

The persecutions of the Middle Ages, in which pillage operated so successfully under the mask of religious fervor, drove these intelligent, perspicacious and reasoning people to all parts of the known world. Successive waves of fanaticism, neatly combined with greed and curiously spaced at centuries, slammed the national doors in their faces. England set the example in 1290 with a royal decree that expelled every Jew on penalty of being hanged. About sixteen thousand went forth under this genial command. France followed in 1394. Aragon and Castile issued a famous edict of expulsion in 1492 and Portugal one in 1496. In all these countries life for the Jews had been for years growing more difficult, more bitter, more hazardous. They were now become the world's homeless wanderers, with every man's hand against them.

One asylum appeared. In estimating the influences that have freed western civilization, too little credit has been given to the enlightened and liberal-spirited people of Holland. We have too largely forgotten that, with the exception of the Swiss cantons, they were the modern pioneers of a democratic form of government, that we sought theirs as a model when we came to erect our own, and that in the midst of an

[1] Conf. Peters, p. 45; Henry Samuel Morais, *The Jews of Philadelphia*, pp. 4-5.

age of bigotry gone wholly mad they stood fast for toleration. The gates of Holland were open when this crisis came upon the Jewish populations, and so many flocked there that Amsterdam became known as the New Jerusalem.[1]

Little Holland, however hospitable, could not hold all the refugees. Many fled to the German cities. But if no edict of expulsion met them there, they must face a spirit of antagonism that had much the same edge. Jews in Germany were supposed to live under the protection of the emperors. This merely meant that the emperors reserved the right to plunder them.[2] It is now probably needless to point out that bare plunder was the reason for all the persecution. The difference in religious faith was largely a pretense. In their long wanderings in many lands, the Jews had learned principles of economics and commerce now universal, but then little understood. It is a curious reflection that if they had been no better business men than the ignorant boors around them, they might have lived in peace anywhere in Europe. The popular belief, often monstrously exaggerated and stimulated, in their hordes of concealed wealth, lighted in a million breasts the passion to slay the obnoxious heathen and so avenge Calvary. One such footless and fantastic invention as "Littell Hewe of Lincoln" must have reaped first and last the ransom of a kingdom. To the modern mind it is enough to know that every edict of expulsion forbade the Jews to retain any but strictly portable possessions, and even of them they were robbed right and left as they

[1] Magnus, p. 220; Morais, 7. [2] Magnus, pp. 216-7.

footed on their exit. In Spain, they could take with them no gold nor silver, and, significantly, could collect no debts.

Aside from the kindly refuge of Holland, which soon became overcrowded, the Jews driven from Portugal and Spain at the end of the fifteenth century had before them a choice of three repellent expedients. They could move to Poland or Turkey, neither of which had manifested a disposition to oppress, fleece or burn them; they could turn *Maranos;* they could take the desperate chance of an emigration to the new and unknown world just beginning to be glimpsed across the Atlantic. The Salomon family, dwelling long in Portugal when the edict of King Manuel came forth, would not follow the example of the Santangels and the Sanchezes. With a tenacity that seemed ingrained and must have been a family heritage, they clung to the ancient faith, avowed, forthright, and no concealment about it.

They went first to Germany, where they endured for a time the miseries of the ghetto and the larcenous attentions of the rulers. In Germany, says Lady Magnus,[1] from the ninth to almost the nineteenth century, Jews lived in terror if at all. They were "shunned and oppressed in the German states even when and where they were not openly and violently outraged. . . . Each city, each street, each house, nearly, in the German dominions could tell sorrowful stories." [2] The iron of old in the Salomon blood found these manhandlings not to be borne. After a few years the family removed to Poland,

[1] *Outlines of Jewish History,* p. 165. [2] *Ibid.*

where for the next two centuries it was under the influence of the history, free spirit and indomitable verve of the typical Pole. The Jews, maybe because they have tasted so much of the bitterness of tyranny, maybe for other reasons, are instinctively sympathetic with all motions toward liberty. The effect upon them of two centuries of the Polish atmosphere seems to have been all in one direction. Jews financed, supported and fought for every attempt to establish freedom.

What they did for Poland, what they dared and what they endured, may be judged from the story of Berko Joselowicz, one of the deathless heroes of the gruesome national tragedy, a Jew that was a colonel in the Polish army and when the second partition came on boldly fought it on the battle-field, hurling himself like a Berseker against huge numbers, the type of the self-immolating patriot, without fear and without reproach.

The Salomons settled at Lissa, which is in the part of Poland that was laid, on the occasion of the happy royal and imperial dinner party, upon the plate of His Serenity of Prussia. It appears that they were ardent patriots. The hope of the family was this young Haym Salomon, born in 1740. The circumstances of the house are not well known. It was once assumed that the father was wealthy and the son had a good education, but documents recently collected have a different look. The one thing certain is that the young man traveled widely, took a good view of men and manners in many places, and acquired a knowledge of languages unusual for his

times. When he was about thirty he returned home and became the close friend and associate of the foremost patriots.[1]

A melancholy change had come over the affairs and prospects of Poland. For years it had been apparent that Russia intended to seize the country if she could; Russian agents and Russian bribe-money were everywhere. At this opportune moment, the Poles fell to quarreling among themselves. What about? The worst of all causes disruptive, a difference in religion. Russian agents cunningly urged on the division. The throne fell vacant. In Poland it was filled by election. Russian influence and gold brought about the choice by the diet of Stanislaus Poniatowski, who had been one of the Serene Catherine's many lovers and was now her mere valet and man servant. In this election the patriots saw the imminent destruction of their country.

Haym Salomon was aligned with Kosciusko and Pulaski in their efforts to save Poland, but is believed to have been most closely attached to Pulaski.

This extraordinary spirit, Casimir Pulaski, born in 1748, was the son of a Polish count and member of a family almost above all others noted for devotion to the independence cause. The father had formed the famous Confederation of Bar, which strove to unite the Poles against their oppressors, and for his prodigious and indefatigable labors against Russian spoliation was put to death in a dungeon. At the age of only twenty-two Casimir

[1] Sparks manuscript; also Thirtieth Congress, First Sessions, House of Representatives, Report No. 504; Thirty-first Congress, First Session, Senate Report No. 177.

was elected commander-in-chief of the patriotic forces. It was while he was striving to unite and inspire his countrymen that he did the thing that must always shine among all tales of daring adventure and determined his fate and probably another's.

With forty followers disguised as peasants he stole into Warsaw by night, made his way to the royal palace, entered it, seized King Stanislaus, whisked him out of the building and, without discovery, through the streets into the country.[1]

The purpose was to sequestrate the spineless king and compel him to stand firm for Poland or to abdicate. They had proceeded prosperously with their quarry and had every reason to expect success, when they encountered a division of the Russian army.

Against this overwhelming force they were obliged to abandon their captive and make their own escape. Casimir Pulaski was hunted into Turkey, where for a time in the Turkish army he hoped in vain for a chance to serve against Russia. In 1775 he heard of the revolt of the American colonies. It appealed strongly to his faith and sympathies. He took the road to Paris, conferred with Franklin, and got to America. There he offered his sword to Washington and became one of the heroes of the Revolution. He perished in its cause at Savannah, October 11, 1779, pierced with a British gunshot.

We have no evidence that Haym Salomon was one of the forty that made this desperate foray in the teeth of fate, but he must have known about it and

[1] William G. Gordon, "Count Casimir Pulaski," in the *Georgia Historical Quarterly* for September, 1929, has an admirable summary of this brilliant career.

sympathized with it, for almost at once he left Poland as swiftly as Pulaski himself. He got him by some means to England,[1] but his real objective was America, where he had reason to believe dwelt a freer spirit and a larger hope. With this faith he was now thrusting out alone, without capital and without acquaintances, four thousand miles to a strange wilderness.

He was no more than following an example already set by thousands of his coreligionists, not only from Poland but from other regions where conditions had become unbearable. They had felt from the first an interest in the new regions their ancestors had done so much to lay upon the lap of Europe. Besides, there was always the alluring probability that however savage might be the men and beasts in fastnesses untried, they would probably be more pitiful than the kings of Europe. The coast of Brazil had hardly been scanned by European eyes before a colony of Portuguese Jews landed there. Others quickly followed. Within a hundred and fifty years there were Jewish colonies at Para, Pernambuco, Bahia, Rio de Janeiro. What it was that they fled from and what civilization was like in those times may be gaged from the fact that the first of all Jews to reach America were children that had been torn from the arms of their parents and sent with a shipload of criminals to St. Thomas.[2]

While the Dutch held Brazil, the newcomers lived in peace. When the country reverted to Portugal,

[1] I am indebted in this discovery to Professor Albert Bushnell Hart.
[2] Magnus, p. 336.

the long arm of persecution reached out and sent the historic wanderers once more abroad upon the face of the earth.[1] From Brazil many sought the French possessions in the West Indies. Louis XIV harried them thence with a decree extending anti-Semitism to all his colonies. The prison, the halter and the fagot—it is a hideous story. In the City of Mexico so late as 1554 at the time of the celebration of the Passover, eighty Jews were burned at the stake amid public rejoicing.

But wherever flew the flag of Holland they felt that they were safe. It was then flying over New Amsterdam. One ship, the *Santa Catarina,* landed there twenty-seven fugitive Jews from Brazil, so poor that on arrival their baggage must be sold to pay their passage money.[2] The proceeds were not enough; and two of the company, David Israel and Moses Ambrasias, must be imprisoned until the amount was raised. From this unpromising beginning has grown the Jewish influence in New York.

In 1772, when Haym Salomon, insubmissive to the destruction of Poland, was looking for a freer world, groups of Jews had made homes in all the leading American settlements from Newport to Savannah. In Newport alone were approximately eleven hundred, and they had built a synagogue of such singular beauty that years afterward it was pointed out as one of the sights of the city.[3] In New York the first Jewish congregation, Shearith Israel,

[1] "Tribe of the wandering foot and weary breast," quotes Morais, p. 5.
[2] Magnus, p. 340; Isaac Markens, *The Hebrews in America,* p. 3.
[3] Magnus, p. 342. But before the outbreak of the Revolution the group at Newport had largely dispersed to other colonies.

had been established as early as 1680. For a time it held services in a frame building in what was then Mill Street and is now South William. The first regular synagogue was built in 1729 and consecrated in 1730. Where Madison and Oliver streets now meet, the first Jewish cemetery was opened in 1681.[1]

There can be no doubt now that the Jews were an incalculable asset to the young colonies, though for a long time the young colonies did not take that view of them. What was imperatively demanded in these venturing settlements was quick and widening communication. The Jews came with exact knowledge of commerce and the skill and experience to prosecute it. Pioneer settlers, intent upon clearing forests and struggling with savages, had no such equipment. To all their kind and kindred there and in the old countries, commerce was largely occult or indecipherable. In every seaboard town it was the Jewish element that with capital and enterprise, with wisdom and daring, forwarded business. Aaron Lopez,[2] of Newport, owned in 1772, twenty-seven square-rigged seagoing vessels, some of them whalers. In New York Hayman Levy[3] was the foremost merchant. Trading with the Indians had been his fortune, but upon a basis unusual or even singular enough to be grotesque. He had dealt justly with them, and they trusted him beyond any other white man. Indeed, they went beyond trusting; they had for him a feeling like worship. By repute, he owned all the houses in what was then Duke and is now

[1] Magnus, p. 346.
[2] Markens, p. 35.
[3] Markens, p. 14.

Beaver Street. By repute, also, he was a kindly, generous, honest old boy that everybody liked.

It was thus to a city where men of his faith and methods had already won distinction that Haym Salomon was making his venture. If he had no capital in coin, he had what was probably better and more quickening. He had such expert knowledge as few men of those times possessed. Commerce, banking, the science of finance, the chief languages of Europe, he had mastered; not superficially but with research. He had been trained to think about the reasons for trade conditions and trade currents; about underlying laws of exchange. Before economics had so much as a name among the peoples that dominated Europe, he was an economist. He had learned how to connote demands and supplies; he had some notion of an organized commerce as against a haphazard. The habit of his family had been to prosper in business, not by drifting along with the tides of chance, but by understanding wants and studying markets. Such a man needed a broader field than Europe for his bread-winning activities, as much as the Pole in him needed a freer atmosphere to breathe in.

That America should have been thought in those days to offer an inviting measure of freedom gives us a rather startling view of the state of the rest of the world. Even in America the freer Jews were likely to be in a way set apart and unfavorably from the other inhabitants. They were not harried, hunted, burned, tortured, ghettoed and despoiled, but in some colonies they could not own real estate, and in some they could not be citizens. In 1737 a Jew elected to

the Colonial Assembly of New York was unseated because of his faith. In 1741, an exciting election being at hand, the Jews were informed that on account of their religious belief they could not vote.[1] The issue of the election meant as much to them as to the others but they could have no part in it.

Even in colonies founded in a pretense of religious liberty, these were the conditions. In 1761, and in the Rhode Island of Roger Williams, Aaron Lopez and Isaac Eliezer petitioned for the right to become citizens like others, and were denied.[2] Maryland, the free, the liberal, had an act excluding all persons "denying that Christ is the Son of God,"[3] and another sweet statute dooming to death all persons that denied the Trinity.

Religious liberty meant that one could have almost any kind of religion except the Jewish. Sometimes it meant that any man was perfectly free to believe with the majority. After that, let him look out for the hangman.

Yet the old superstitious hatred and measureless greed that had flowered so tragically and so often in the back corners of Europe, had here become merely a thing static, atavistic, and physically harmless. Unenlightened persons might still think of a Jew not as a fellow creature, but only as a strange being to be avoided, segregated and handicapped lest he should come to own us all. Beyond this they were willing to let him alone. The moldy fiction that the Jew is naturally more acquisitive than the Anglo-

[1] William L. Stone, *History of New York City*, p. 140.
[2] Markens, pp. 34-5.
[3] Magnus, p. 343.

Saxon had to be shattered by the years before its hold lessened upon the Nordic imagination.

In the teeth of whatsoever obstacles, the Jews continued to come to America, even to the colonies that most scowled upon them, came, and made homes and prospered, injured no one, aided good causes, won the reluctant respect of their Christian fellows. Sometimes they won it in ways that shamed the Christian and lightened history with gentle touches of humor and bigger touches of the spirit tolerant. It was a Jew once persecuted by Peter Stuyvesant that gave largely to build the first Lutheran church in New York. Something else these early Jews achieved even more difficult. In the records, at least, they refuted the curious antique superstition that because a Jew is loyal to his religion he cannot be loyal to his country. Jews that had been first-class Poles in Poland became first-class Americans in America.

An odd thing but undeniable was noted about them everywhere. Their influence and importance were always somewhat disproportioned to their numbers. Yet, after a time, their numbers could no longer be overlooked. In Georgia they were reported to be notable pioneers. In Philadelphia they led in shipping and commercial enterprises. Before the eighteenth century was three quarters done, there were more than five hundred of them in little Charleston.

Haym Salomon did not tarry long in England. He found a ship about to depart for America, and took passage in it. A ship it was, or something of that order, being a contraption that would float though

it might travel sidewise as easily as straight ahead. On this he was transported, after weeks of weary tossing, to the new shores. Concerning a later period of his career when the heed of men was much more upon him, tradition ascribes to him a stature slightly under the average, a strong, rugged but kindly face, active, observant eyes, a certain tendency to reticence in speech that was not unpleasing, and the charm of a courtly manner. He must have been thus or near it when, thirty-two years old, in a high-pooped and unweatherly tub he managed alone and penniless to cross the Atlantic.

CHAPTER II

The Long, Long Fight

IT was a turbulent and troubled New York into which the emigrants from Poland and elsewhere stepped in the year 1772.

Yet no place could have seemed more peacefully set in surroundings of a poetic and plethoric charm. The town, not at all ill-built, stood on the extreme southern tip of Manhattan Island, with blue water, bright hills, and solemn Druidic woods around it. The gate to the Upper Bay opened between two green forested hillocks, Bay Ridge on one side, Staten Island on the other. A few houses stood on Brooklyn Heights and a few more on Paulus Hook in New Jersey. Everything else was sweet green meadow and virgin forest.

The good ship *Amelia,* or some such name, from London came in past the lighthouse recently erected on the point of Sandy Hook and beat up through the Lower Bay past the Narrows, taking advantage of the set of the tide and anchoring when it ran contrariwise. At last she warped into a berth at Coenties Slip, and her passengers emerged at once into the heart of the settlement.

Physically, it was a diminutive bantam of a place, but already beginning to strut. In 1757 there had been found to be 10,700 inhabitants and it was be-

lieved to contain all of two thousand buildings, counting stables and barns. Men spoke with pride of the fact that from the Battery the houses extended on both sides of Broadway northward almost a mile. By 1772 the population had increased to 14,000 and the northern limits had reached what is now Murray Street, which debuts upon the present City Hall Park. Where the Post Road to Boston turned from Broadway at what is now Vesey Street, there began an open space called The Fields or The Common, which was an unkempt outing ground. Beyond this were a few farms, and then woods, hills, streams and beautiful cold clear springs. As far away as what is now Forty-fifth Street the Beekman family had built in the midst of a forest a mansion renowned for elegance. It was almost an outpost. At the upper end of the island still lingered a few Indians.

The business region, in which young Salomon was most interested, was chiefly around Bowling Green and in adjacent streets, such as Duke and Broad. Wall Street made the show of fashionable residence. On the north side of it stood a row of houses that the New Yorker spoke of while drawing in his breath for pride, for they expressed wealth, comfort and no mean taste. The City Hall stood in the same street, at Nassau.

Of late the place had taken on metropolitan adornments, and doubtless some of that confident spirit of superiority that has since distinguished it. Only a short time before, it had discarded the venerable device of lighting the streets at night with lanterns that each householder must display, and at most of

OLD CITY HALL, NEW YORK, 1786
Salomon's New York office was near this building

the street intersections had been erected real lamp posts with lamps lighted at the public expense. Broadway, Fulton, Dey, Thames and Beekman streets had been paved and regulated. In 1761 a theater had been opened in Beekman Street, but against much opposition, being viewed as an innovation of the godless. The same year, mayhap as a riposte against the devil and his works, the inhabitants had been strictly forbidden to indulge in raffles. The first Merchants Exchange had been opened at the foot of Broad Street. New York was striding ahead. Trinity Church (the first) had been completed in 1697; St. Paul's Chapel in 1766. People objected to the chapel. It was at Broadway and Vesey Street and unreasonably far uptown. Worshipers, however ardent, could not be expected to journey out into the country to make their devotions.[1] Beyond the chapel to the north and on the utmost edge of the town was a college, dutifully called King's, situated in handsomely wooded grounds between Murray Street and Park Place. The houses were usually built close upon the street line and were often of wood, though brick and stone houses were common.

In some ways, life was easy in the frontier settlement. Young Salomon found he could get good board for $2.40 a week, and somewhat more at the tavern. Beef was nine cents a pound, veal nine to twelve cents, milk six cents a quart, butter thirty cents a pound.[2] The abominable price of butter was explained because not enough persons kept cows.

[1] Stone, p. 232.
[2] Mary L. Booth, *History of the City of New York,* Vol. I, p. 397.

The farms on Long Island, Staten Island and Manhattan were chiefly in the hands of the Dutch.

Philadelphia, ninety miles away and the metropolis of America, was easily reached. From a landing in the North River near the Battery, you took a lee-board boat called a pirogue and operated by one man. If the weather allowed, this contrivance bore you in the course of time, to Staten Island's romantic shores. There a stage-coach carried you across the island and another pirogue or scow or something transported you to Perth Amboy, whence ran another stage-coach to Bordentown on the Delaware River. Then another scow or pirogue or something brought you comfortably down to Philadelphia.[1]

Usually the journeying was pleasant and seldom consumed more than three days. In winter it might be otherwise. In January, 1768, nine passengers attempted the voyage to Staten Island in this way. The pirogue struck a sand-bank and sank. The entire party was exposed all night to the wind and bitter cold. Eight voyagers were so badly frost-bitten as to lose life or limb. One that escaped unharmed was destined to a lasting place in the country's history. He had lived in many climes, mostly cold. When the party was rescued from its perilous position on the reef, it was taken to an inn on the Jersey shore. This one man refused to go near a fire but called for a tub of ice water into which he plunged his limbs and body. Then he went to bed and to sleep and awoke safe and sound. He was the Baron de Kalb.[2]

But about young Salomon. The colony was pros-

[1] Stone, pp. 186-7. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 187.

pering; it was growing. Its products could be sold abroad, or some of them, if Parliament did not interfere. Its people needed many things, and as Parliament would not allow them to manufacture freely, such things were commodities for foreign commerce. Commerce was the primal necessity, the trained mind of Salomon must have quickly understood the need, and he opened a brokerage and commission merchant's office in Broad Street.

After which wisdom, he performed an act of folly so great it was almost preposterous.

He allied himself with members of a discredited and disreputable organization that was called the Sons of Liberty.[1]

Next to his choice of America as a refuge, this was the turning point in his story, with results of grave meaning to himself and others. We must understand, then, first of all why it was so foolish if it was so important and why the organization he mingled with was so discredited and disreputable. The sequelæ will fall in of themselves.

The unrest in the little city's life that he had quickly noticed was of long standing. Although more than a century had passed since New Amsterdam became New York, a considerable part of the population, being of Dutch descent, was still more or less Dutch in its mental processes; a fact that posterity may recall with thanks. The ancestors of these people had fought against Alva; when it came to any question of liberty they themselves were stiffer in the

[1] Sparks Manuscript; thirty-seventh Congress, Senate Report, No. 65; Mathews affidavit—to be referred to later.

neck than any crowbar. When Salomon came upon the scene, this element, combined with a certain part of the other populations, English, Irish and Scotch, was engaged in a desperate struggle against constituted authority on an issue of liberty crucial to them and of stupendous moment to their descendants, of whom they probably had not a thought.

The quarrel was old and went much deeper than the particular abrasions that called for its visible and outward showings. The truth is that from almost the beginning of the English occupation, the New Yorkers had felt that they were badly used.[1] They had torn themselves from their homes, made what was for the times a lunatic venture in skiffs across unknown seas, had fought the wilderness and the savages, all to build an empire for England, and England cared not a hoot for them except to use them when she happened to think of them or had some need of their services. This was the general and always growing complaint.

One way she used them that salted the original wound was to dump upon them as governors various worthless and superfluous persons that being noblemen must be provided for and being scoundrels[2] were not desired at home. In their official functions in the New World the chief of their endeavors seemed to center upon getting rich at public expense and as swiftly as might be. Early in the reign of William and Mary the hanging of Leisler and his companion by one of these visitors had deeply offended the Dutch part of the population and

[1] Booth, Vol. I, p. 330. [2] *Ibid.*

shocked others. The division thus started was slowly extended by clash after clash between governor and governed, until it became at heart a thing incurable.

The story of Leisler was the primordial germ of the American revolt and the beginning of the activities into which Haym Salomon plunged, but it is usually overlooked in estimates of these conditions. It antedated Lexington by eighty-five years but was, in a way, remote but certain, its forebear.

Jacob Leisler was a Dutchman, wealthy, stern, conscientious, somewhat of the upper hand, orthodox in religion, liberal in politics. When the English took possession of New Amsterdam they rode the high horse, particularly in the matter of taxation, which they levied upon the burghers on no other authority than the edict of the Duke of York, brother of the king and nominal ruler of the colony—at a distance of three thousand miles. This alienated the Dutch element, which at first had submitted easily enough to a change of masters. The population thereupon split into factions—plebeians and aristocrats.[1] The aristocrats were the English officers and their circle; the plebeians included the Dutch and the mechanics.

So long as James II lasted upon the throne, the aristocrats had everything their own way. When news came that the poor, dull, half-witted Stuart had at last been deposed, New York was without a governor. The plebeians met and appointed a Committee of Safety (inasmuch as war with France was impending), and chose Leisler to be captain of the fort

[1] Booth, Vol. I, pp. 220, 225-6; B. J. Lossing, *History of New York City*, p. 32.

with power to preserve peace and suppress rebellion until instructions should come from home. The chances of war manifestly growing worse, the Committee before long authorized Leisler to act as governor of the province until one should arrive and to put the settlements in a state of defense. He was recognized by other colonies as the governor *de facto,* but the aristocrats in New York bitterly resented his elevation and assailed him with incessant intrigues. He was not of their order.

English he spoke and wrote imperfectly and this defect was in the end his undoing, or a help thereto.[1] For months he continued to exercise the functions of governor and showed energy and capacity in organizing and furthering defense. But nothing would satisfy the aristocratic party, which denounced him as a usurper, an upstart and a dangerous radical. The intensity of the feeling between the factions reminds one of certain passages in early medieval history, the implacable rage of Guelf against Ghibelline and all that. If it seems to us now preposterous and juvenile we must remember that racial antipathies have never been anything else.

Leisler wrote a letter to King William explaining the situation and asking for instructions. It seems that because of his bad English it was a crude and crab-footed document and, by some underling in England, wholly misconstrued. No answer was returned, but about the end of 1689 King William set a precedent, religiously followed by his successors. He picked out to be governor for New York, a

[1] Booth, Vol. I, p. 231.

notoriously drunken and incompetent person named Sloughter, who was forthwith dispatched with ships and troops; also with a lieutenant governor named Ingoldsby.

Bad weather attended the crossing and the lieutenant governor won to shore ahead of his chief. The anti-Leisler leaders were waiting for him and informed him of the situation—from their point of view. He was of their own kind and easily gave them sympathy and aid, the first thing being to demand the surrender of the fort, where Leisler was abiding.[1]

No warrant was shown with this demand, nor other evidence of authority. Leisler, who did not know Ingoldsby from Noah's nephew, refused to give up the place until he knew to whom he was transferring it and why. When the soldiers were landed from the ships to support the lieutenant governor they were promptly mobbed by the people in the streets, although Leisler had given orders that they should be taken care of in the barracks.

It was into this situation that the new governor stumbled a few days later. The anti-Leisler elements had been equally forehanded in his case and exploited their side of the quarrel. He seems not to have heard the other. At their instigation he sent Ingoldsby back to demand once more the surrender of the fort, but with no papers in hand. Leisler again refused to comply without a warrant. He sent two of his officers to Sloughter to ascertain if he were indeed the warranted governor. Sloughter threw the officers into jail. When Leisler became convinced

[1] Booth, Vol. I, pp. 232-3.

(though not by these means) that the new governor had actually arrived, he wrote him apologizing for the delay he had caused and giving up the fort. The badly written letter was again misconstrued.

Thereupon he was arrested for high treason and so was his son-in-law and secretary, Jacob Millborne. They were tried before a court packed against them and sentenced to be hanged.

With all his bad traits, Sloughter seems to have retained in his sober moments some symptoms of decency. He hesitated to sign the death warrants. One night the leaders of the aristocratic party made him more than usually drunken, caused him to sign the warrants when he knew not what he was doing and started instantly to execute the sentence.

All their preparations had been made in advance, even to the building of the gallows upon Leisler's own grounds near the present post office. Leisler and Millborne were whisked out of jail and hanged without delay or warning, their enemies being fearful that Sloughter might grow sober and send a reprieve.[1]

Despite all the secrecy and haste, word of the work on foot went abroad among the citizens. Flocking to the gallows, they wept and cried aloud when they saw their champions brought out for death. The deep resentment planted by the savagery of that night lingered long among the Dutch and the common people. A generation later it was still burning when the next scene in the long drama ushered in a character that upheld and vindicated their cause.

[1] Booth, Vol. I, p. 238.

John Peter Zenger was his name, and he too was of Dutch descent. He had a story worth telling on its own account, charged with big consequences in history, and no doubt full of a peculiar interest to Haym Salomon when he came to hear of it. Besides, this Zenger was indirectly the founder of the Sons of Liberty whose functions in this narrative you may presently expect.

In the line of worthless governors inflicted upon the province, came as far back as August, 1732, one Colonel William Cosby. For some months there had been a happy interval in which New York had no imported chief executive, the duties of the office being discharged by Rip Van Dam, President of the Council. It is easy to see in what followed more evidences of the nationalistic division. Van Dam was Dutch of the Dutch and therefore hateful to the English.

Governor Cosby's first act on taking office was to sue Van Dam for one-half the salary the Dutchman had drawn while acting as governor. The grounds for this demand seem sufficiently absurd now, but the judge of the court that heard the action was not unmindful of racial and royal obligations and the source of his income. Therefore, he gave judgment in behalf of Cosby, who now suspended Van Dam from his office of President of the Council.[1]

The decision was extremely unpopular with all the elements in the city except those that were assiduously parasiting around the imitation court that Cosby had set up. Many anonymous circulars and

[1] Booth, Vol. I, p. 331.

pamphlets appeared attacking the suit and Cosby for bringing it. These attacks were vigorously resented in the official newspaper of the government, which was a rag called the "New York Gazette." Zenger was a printer and a Dutchman, keen for Van Dam. He began publishing a newspaper called the "Weekly Journal," in which Cosby's administration was unfavorably mentioned.

The ruffled Cosby had recourse to the courts again and Zenger was arrested on Sunday, November 17, 1734, held the next day in preposterous bail and slung into prison, whence he continued to edit his newspaper and assail the governor.

The charge against him was criminal libel; what he had said or the like of it would now be regarded as flabby and perfunctory criticism, devoid of flavor. In those days it was like arson or treason felony.

To make sure of conviction the court thoughtfully disbarred Zenger's two lawyers, leaving him without counsel. One of the attorneys thus distinguished was named James Alexander. He had stood by his client and demanded his rights with a persistence that angered officialdom and finally stirred it to this style of revenge.

Meantime, however, the grand jury, despite stringent instructions, refused to indict Zenger, so that he must be held on an extraordinary authority. Governor and Council ordered his newspaper to be burned by the common hangman. Common hangman refused, and the burning had to be done by the sheriff's black servant.[1]

[1] Booth, Vol. I, pp. 332-3.

By this time, the revolutionary spirits in the city were thoroughly aroused. As there was now no attorney that could defend Zenger, his friends sent to Philadelphia and secured the services of Andrew Hamilton, leader of the American bar. He was past eighty, but he came to New York, took charge of the case and tried it so vigorously that, although the jury was instructed by the judges to convict the prisoner, it coolly ignored the instruction and on the first ballot found a verdict of Not Guilty. A tremendous clamor of applause roared through the courtroom and joy was unconfined and likewise unrefined throughout a considerable part of the city.

While the case was under way, there had been formed in New York this Sons of Liberty organization that was to have an almost immeasurable influence upon the course of events, with reactions upon the daily walk of Haym Salomon. It was a secret society. When it is now mentioned, if at all, it is assigned in its functions to a period much later. As a matter of fact, it was born in this year 1734 and directly of the Zenger case. A group of men perceived clearly that what was involved here was fundamental to human freedom. Government was attempting to coerce and control the expression of opinion. At that time, governments might easily do this in Europe. They could not easily do it in a faraway new settlement of mingled people chiefly Dutch, Irish and Scotch. The Sons of Liberty undertook to fight the prosecution of Zenger. It was they that employed Andrew Hamilton and brought him from Philadelphia to plead the case. When he had

won it they led the movement to present to him the freedom of the city in a gold box. And it was they that, when the Zenger case had ceased from troubling, continued to watch every movement of every governor and resent every invasion of popular rights.[1]

They had a plenty of occasions. The quarrels between government and governed went on most of the time and usually grew worse. Nearly all the governors were warned before they left home that they would encounter a headstrong and violent people that must be held hard upon the rein. Nearly every governor did something soon after his arrival to prove that he understood the duty laid upon him by this information. The particular thing that was quarreled about was only a pretext. Underneath was the everlasting incongruity of a government in old-style Europe trying to manage on frayed-out lines a people in new-style America. That was the whole story.

One of the commonest occasions of a row was over the appropriations. Every governor, when sufficiently sober to express himself, demanded that the money for his salary, support and household should be a continuing and automatic appropriation, once for all. The Colonial Assembly, consisting of a Council and House of elected representatives, wanted these items to be voted annually at discretion. This seems nothing to lose one's head about, but, in the prevailing temper of the times, it was enough. Governor and governed would have fought over a toothpick.

[1] Booth, Vol. I, pp. 343-4.

The brawl made its way to England, where the attitude of the Assembly was viewed with indignation as another evidence of a wicked and rebellious spirit. As far back as 1741 a governor in his speech to the Assembly rebuked it for its fractious disposition and warned it of fears already entertained in England "that the plantations were not without thoughts of throwing off the dependence upon the crown,"[1] a remark that showed a perspicacity almost human in its intelligence.

In 1748 they were quarreling about the royal prerogative that was in some way connected with the issuing of paper money. When that failed to cause the blood to boil they reverted to the governor's salary, always handy as a bone of contention. Admiral George Clinton had come over as governor. About three years of the incessant strife were enough to wear him out and he resigned.[2] Sir Danvers Osborne was next. He arrived in his ship on Sunday, October 7, 1753. For the next four days he took a competent survey of the situation. In England he had been especially instructed to break down the provincial opposition about the salary business. He summoned the Council to confer about it and asked the opinion of each member as to the possibility of exorcising the evil spirit abroad in the land. He was assured on all hands that so far as the matter of the appropriation was concerned the fight was hopeless. That night he spent in arranging his papers and putting his affairs in order. Toward morning he

[1] Stone, p. 146.
[2] Booth, Vol. I, p. 376.

hanged himself to his garden fence, Friday, October 12, 1753.[1]

The next unfortunate to front contumacy as expressed by the colonists was Sir Charles Hardy, also incompetent, who frankly announced to the Council that he knew nothing about law and intimated that he cared less. He lasted about three years full of trouble.[2] Yet he and his kind did not struggle alone. The public was divided and each faction heartily hated the other. The Dutch element, the mechanics, the small merchants and hoi polloi were against the government; the aristocrats, the well-to-do, the English of rank or station and the financial and commercial interests were demurely loyal.

Not always without straining. One of the amazing facts about the history of those savage times is the tameness with which the British people acquiesced in the infamous system of slave-catching that was called impressment. That they never would be slaves was the burden of their creed as of their popular song, but at that time and for years afterward they submitted with hardly a protest to a form of slavery one might think the most hateful. The king needed men for his navy. Any man that stepped out of doors at night or into a lonely place by day was likely to be seized by a press-gang, gagged, pinioned and dragged aboard a man-of-war where he must serve chiefly without pay and willy-nilly. In England this practice went well enough. When it was transferred to America a furious outcry arose and the insistence

[1] Booth, Vol. II, 376-380; Stone, pp. 171-2.
[2] Stone, p. 179; Booth, Vol. I, p. 386.

LOWER WALL STREET IN 1797

of the government upon its right to seize, gag and manacle became another force to break the colonial leading strings.

In August, 1760, to give you but one example, a colonial ship arrived in the bay from Lisbon. A British man-of-war that was lying near was in the chronic condition of man-shortage. Its commander sent a boat to the merchant ship to seize as many men as were needed. The colonial crew saw the boat coming and knew well enough from much observation what merry game was toward. They rose, seized the ship, and locked the captain and other officers down below. Then they refused to allow the government boat to come alongside. The imprisoned captain from a cabin window called out to the boat that he was a captive and unable to obey the order to deliver over the required complement. The boat fired into the waist, killed one man and wounded many.[1] Then the boat's crew came aboard and seized what they wanted.

When this became known the colony blazed.

The French and Indian War, which in an unexpected way brought these struggles to a head, began in 1754. Latter-day writing has tended so to obscure the issue involved that scarcely any of it is left to the casual eye, but we have here no good chance to escape it, because the story of Haym Salomon is part and parcel of it, and to follow him and his performances we must see the clash as he saw it.

The war fell heavily upon New York with the other colonies. It lasted six years, and in that time,

[1] Booth, Vol. I, pp. 393-4.

according to figures accepted but not too well verified, thirteen thousand colonists had been killed or wounded in or near battle, and the settlements had saddled themselves with additional debts and obligations that have been estimated at $6,500,000.[1] (Other and less careful authorities give larger totals for these items.) The result of their fighting and adventuring was an immense addition to the British Empire but small profit to themselves that anybody could notice. It is common now to say or to insinuate that England generously carried on the war to save the colonists from being eaten alive by the fierce ferocious French, who at the beginning held Canada. Impartial review of the facts seems to indicate that the peril that menaced the colonists from the fierce ferocious French was at all times of the slightest and existed chiefly in the brains of propagandists. In all the French possessions, the total number of white men capable of bearing arms was estimated at twenty thousand; but of course certain Indian tribes were with the French.

But however this may be, when the war was done with and its bills added up, there had been a great addition to the national debt of England, not caused so much by the operations in America as by wars on the continent of Europe and bungling interference with continental affairs, including the filthy pension to Frederick the Great.[2] The colonies had borne their full share of the American part of the struggle. The British, being troubled with an increased taxation

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 407.

[2] Lecky, *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, Vol. II, p. 491. It was for $3,500,000 a year and was paid for five years.

to support their increased interest account, tried to shift part of the new load to the colonial shoulders. The colonials resented the attempt.

This is the shape that a quarrel that had lasted through two generations finally assumed. On both sides there was the camouflage that customarily attends these motions; seldom such an issue is fought otherwise than by pretending it to be fought about something else. England did not really need the money she now tried to collect. For a long time the conviction had been growing that the colonies were haughty and disloyal, and something drastic was needed to bring them to their duty. The colonists could have paid the new taxes, but they had long regarded the government as tyrannical and stupid and were beginning to tire of it.

Something of the kind was inevitable. We are to remember that these were people drawn from several nations; they were hardy spirits; many of them, like the Jews, had made the desperate venture to the New World to escape persecutions in the Old. They came out of the atmosphere of seventeenth and eighteenth century Europe, which was fairly putrid, and had been breathing something wholly different. The struggle in the healthier air of the wilderness could not fail to develop sturdiness of character while it dimmed the memories of the old connection. Mere distance and then that queer feeling so potent upon all the children of earth, the loyalty to the birthplace, dissolved in the typical American the last ties that bound him to the old country.

The British government had sense enough to feel the colonists slipping but not enough to know that nothing could stop the process. It sent over troops ostensibly to defend them, in reality to overawe them.[1] The troops and their officers, deeming themselves quartered upon ignorant bushmen, behaved badly. Every day the old fealty weakened, and every year more men in the colonies adopted the practice of calling themselves and deeming themselves Americans. Then came along that Stamp Act and scratched the match in the powder house.

The process of obscuration has landed the responsibility for this stupidity upon George III. Poor imbecile, he had next to nothing to do with it. The real responsibility rests upon the British governing class, which was eager to ease its own tax burdens and still more eager to teach a lesson in humility to colonials that for more than a generation had shown disposition to rear against the bit.

George III came to the throne in 1760. The famous Stamp Act, which is supposed to have caused all the trouble and was only an incident, was passed by the British Parliament five years later. But before it had been introduced there, while it was still latent in the dull minds of Grenville and his associates, British authority and colonial resentment had come to grips openly in the streets of New York, and blood had been shed. After that, wise men might have surmised what the end would be.

It was a British subaltern officer, a figure not always admirable in history, that facilitated the first

[1] Booth, Vol. I, pp. 438-9.

MAJOR-GENERAL ALEXANDER MACDOUGALL
Continental Army

battle. Rogers was his name.[1] He was a major in one of the regiments sent to overawe New York. In the annals appear repeated complaints of the insolence and intolerable arrogance of the British officers, and Rogers seems to have been one of the worst. To an apparent desire to chasten the detestable provincials he added a habit of refusing to pay the bills he contracted among them. A new jail had lately been erected at the northeast corner of The Fields or The Common. At that time imprisonment for debt was regarded as one of the imperishable safeguards of social order and practiced freely. Major Rogers's creditors could see no difference between him and another that refused to liquidate, and in January, 1764, they had him arrested. He was shut up in the new jail, loudly protesting.

His fellow officers took his arrest as an insult to His Britannic Majesty's arms and service. They swarmed to the jail and demanded the major's instant release.[2] The jailer declined to recognize any but the constituted authorities. Thereupon a mob of soldiers was gathered, broke into the jail and released all the prisoners, including the major. But the colonial militia had been summoned and now arrived and a battle ensued in which a British sergeant was shot and killed.

In all these stirring events the Sons of Liberty had been incessantly busy. Isaac Sears, John Lamb and Alexander MacDougall were their most active

[1] A good account of Rogers and his performance is to be found in a paper entitled *The Old Martyrs' Prison,* presented to the Board of Aldermen and reprinted in *The City Record* of October 23, 1902. Also Booth, 399-400.
[2] Booth, Vol. I, p. 399; also *The Old Martyrs' Prison.*

leaders. All were indomitable spirits and all of the common people. MacDougall had begun life as a sailor,[1] and while still a young man had risen to command. Then he took to the shore and the trade of a printer. He was now in his forty-first year, a short, alert, muscular man, with a powerful jaw, and cold blue eyes.

Haym Salomon, having found a place to live and an office, was doing business as a commission merchant, dealer in securities and ship broker. He made many acquaintances, Alexander MacDougall, for one. MacDougall explained to him the situation in New York and the work and objects of the Sons of Liberty. A man that had left Poland because his soul revolted at tyranny could not hear such a tale unmoved. He had stepped from one struggle for principle into another. It was when he had been a few months on terms of intimacy with MacDougall that Salomon, ambitious young candidate for business success in the colony, took all his chances as if in his hands and threw them away by casting in his lot with the Sons of Liberty.

For any man at all careful about his standing with the authoritative element, this would have been foolish enough, but for one in Salomon's position it was like madness. He had his way to make, and every influence that could help him on that road was on the other side. He had to do business, and most of the business men with whom he must deal looked upon the Sons of Liberty as sons of perdition. He had started upon a delicate and difficult venture,

[1] Lossing, *History of New York City*, p. 31.

and the powers on the side of the crown could crash it like an egg-shell. Against this was nothing that could help him, further him or even protect him. The Sons of Liberty represented a revolt that was certain to end in disaster, and virtually certain to be ornamented in its ruin with the dangling bodies of its supporters, unless they mended their ways. The idea that a group of men, none of them eminent or influential, and some not too respectable, could achieve anything by throwing themselves barehanded against the most powerful government in the world, was mere lunacy. There was not one chance in a million that they could win anything except prison cells or a row of halters.

Besides, it was none of his quarrel. He had not been born in the colony; only a few weeks before he had seen it for the first time. Let the mad settlers fight their own mad fights. The only possible interest Haym Salomon could have in such a place was to extend his business and protect it.

Thus the voices of wisdom. In the teeth of them all, he went his way and alined himself with the contumacious, with Isaac Sears, John Lamb and Alexander MacDougall.

CHAPTER III

The Midnight Ride of an Effigy

THERE was much about Alexander MacDougall to attract any person experienced in reading character, and still more for one that had an instinctive hatred of oppression and a love of justice. He had that quiet, grave, stedfast, reserved way of a man having himself perfectly in hand, capable of high purposes and capable of great hazards for them. He must, in turn, have had an intuitive perception about men of his own order of mind. Naturally, he and Haym Salomon became close friends. MacDougall had a story of his own that would have endeared him to any soldier of liberty. Salomon must have heard it (though, we may believe, not from his friend's lips) when first he began to sense the real situation in his new home. It was a story that entirely aside from its place in this record would be worth telling, and to reach it intelligibly we must first get to the end of the Stamp Act chapter.

The idea of sawing off part of Britain's debt upon the colonies and using the tax to subdue their haughty spirit was first broached by Grenville when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1763. The next year he became prime minister and announced this project as the policy of his administration. The

fiction employed of the wishes of the sovereign had not much more validity then than it has now. The hand of the king in the matter was the hand of a chess automaton. Inside the machine sat the governing class, moving the pawns and knowing perfectly well the reason for each move. It seems now highly absurd that any one should have been deceived about it—or could have been. The real animus was made as clear as day by another act following close upon the heels of the first and increasing to ten thousand men the standing army already employed to overawe the colonists.

Soldiery failed to terrify these malcontents. When the news reached New York that Grenville had announced his taxing plan, the Assembly adopted a stiff resolution of protest. When the Stamp Act was finally passed by Parliament with scarcely a dissenting voice, March 22, 1765, the spirit of rebellion that had been all these years growing up in the colonies flamed out. How it flamed elsewhere is familiar in our histories, but the peculiar story of its rising and falling in New York has been strangely neglected and, as the career of Haym Salomon hung entirely upon these vicissitudes, we had better have them in full.

The news of the action of Parliament came to New York in April. The latest in the line of incompetent persons sent to rattle around in the chair of the governor had died, and the man in charge was a curious, opinionated and unreasoning old muddler named Cadwallader Colden.[1] He went out of his way to

[1] Booth, Vol. I, p. 393.

announce that when the stamps should arrive they would be distributed for use in accordance with the intention of Parliament. The use was irksome, we can see that plainly, and no doubt was so intended. Every form of legal document, all placards, public announcements, newspapers and pamphlets must be printed or written upon paper bearing the government's stamps, which could be purchased at so much a hundred.

If it had been any other law with the same purpose of antagonism the reaction would have been the same. The next morning after Acting Governor Colden had made his menacing declaration, there appeared on the dead walls of the city a printed placard bearing the heading—

THE FOLLY OF ENGLAND AND THE RUIN OF AMERICA

and calling upon the citizens to resist the act. The author and printer of this sedition were undisclosed, but from what we know now it seems that one might have placed hands upon both in the same restless person. What was sufficiently well known to everybody was that the Sons of Liberty were ceaselessly at work attacking the law and exciting the people against it. Plainly, the bold traitor here must be one of the Sons.

In a few days another printed placard appeared as mysteriously as the first. The reading of it might have convinced any but a congenital imbecile that trouble was at hand.

PRO PATRIA

The first man that either distributes or makes use of stamped paper, let him take care of his house, person and effects.

Vox Populi

and underneath this significant hint—

WE DARE.[1]

Colden must have heard of this with a shiver. There was already stationed at New York an overawing garrison twice as large as the membership of the ubiquitous Sons, but two to one seemed inadequate to his vision, and he hurriedly sent for the garrisons at Crown Point and other strongholds to be concentrated in the disaffected city. The official stamp distributor, one McEwen, read the placard aright and consulted safety by resigning his place. Men similarly officed in other colonies followed his wise example, or fled. The stamp director of Maryland hid himself in the fastnesses of Long Island.

The act was to go into effect on November 1, 1765. Holt's "New York Gazette or Weekly Post Boy" was a newspaper in the interest of the Sons of Liberty. On October 31 it printed this:[2]

A FUNERAL LAMENTATION
ON THE DEATH OF LIBERTY
WHO FINALLY EXPIRES ON THE
31ST OF OCTOBER IN THE YEAR
OF OUR LORD. MDCCLXV
AND OF OUR SLAVERY I.

[1] Stone, pp. 199-200. [2] Booth, Vol. I, p. 414.

But before this lugubrious day arrived, the business men of New York had taken a step that was destined not only to nullify the Stamp Act but to have other consequences of which not one of them dreamed.

The manner of it is one of the landmarks of history. It was in fact the first widespread, notable and decisive application of the principle of the boycott. For still another century it was to be without formulation and without its now familiar name, but the essence of it was just one thing. On that same October 31, 1765, at a meeting of merchants, some one whose name unluckily has been lost in oblivion suggested that a good way to bring Parliament to terms was to cease to buy anything of British origin. The suggestion instantly took the imagination of the meeting, a committee was appointed to draw up a plan, and the end was an agreement circulated among the merchants that after January 1, 1766, they would import nothing from England. Correspondence was begun with merchants in other colonies where the suggestion had already taken root, and the next news British manufacturers and exporters had from the New World was the ruin of their trade. It was their loud protests at home and not the complaints of the colonists nor any argumentation nor the signs of colonial revolt that wakened the dull government to a sense of the road it was following.[1]

Of this maneuver and its results Salomon must have heard almost as soon as he landed. His first resort was naturally to the people of his own faith,

[1] Booth, Vol. I, p. 429.

and they had played a notable part in the boycott affair. The total Jewish population of New York at that time was about sixty. Many of them were prosperous importers. Every Jewish merchant in the city signed the non-importation agreement. Many an English-descended merchant either avoided signing or signed with tongue in cheek, meaning to continue to import on the sly. The Jews signed and kept their word. Yet the fight was none of theirs. The colony that was trying to maintain its rights would grant none or few to Jews. Politically and socially, they were outsiders. Whether the colonists won or the government could make no difference to Jews. Outsiders they would be in any event. But they signed the agreement and they kept it. Whatever may be the preferred explanation of this fact, fact it is.

The hated stamps were already in the city, but only a few officers had seen them. Upon their arrival from England, Colden had conveyed them into the fort for safekeeping, and then, having mind upon his own well-being, had shut himself within the same strong walls. No one dared to move the stamps thence and no attempt was made to put them to use.[1] So far as New York was concerned, George Grenville's double-cross law was already in the discard.

But this situation of armed truce did not suit the Sons of Liberty, being Sears, Lamb, MacDougall and the like. They gathered one night by preconcert in The Fields, marched in an orderly way to the fort and demanded at its gates that the stamps be surrendered to them. The commandant refused. They

[1] Stone, pp. 199-200.

then demanded that the fort be delivered into their hands. Naturally, this also awakened no enthusiasm in the commandant's breast. Then they marched back to The Fields (now City Hall Park), proceeded in a businesslike way to erect a gallows and hanged thereon effigies of Colden and a man holding a boot in one hand, by which they signaled their detestation of Lord Bute. They then took down these figures and the gallows, and carried them in a torchlight procession through the streets and to the fort, where they again demanded admission. The gates being barred against them they proceeded to Colden's carriage house, brought out the family coach, put the figures inside of it and paraded thus through the city.[1]

When the paraders had gone about an hour, they returned to the fort, reerected the gallows, and once more hanged the effigies upon it. At that time Bowling Green was surrounded with a picket fence. They now marched to the Green, tore off the fence palings, made of them a bonfire in front of the fort and burned in it the Colden coach, two of his sleighs, some other vehicles—and the two effigies.

All this was done with a curious, cool deliberation, under direction of the Sons of Liberty. The steadiness of the crowd might have meant more to the observant than any outburst of frenzy. But another part of the citizenship was not so well ordered. They overran the Battery, drove off the guards, spiked the cannon it held and proceeded to other work.

Among the British officers quartered in New York

[1] Stone, pp. 200-201.

was one that had made himself more than his fellows obnoxious, which seems on the whole to have been superfluous labor. He had freely expressed his views as to what should be done to bring the mad colonists to their senses and it was an opinion not charged with compliments and flattering unction. His name was Major James of the Artillery and he lived at the corner of Greenwich and Warren streets. When they had done with the cannon at the Battery, certain of the citizens thought the time propitious to settle their account with Major James. They marched to his house, broke in, carried out his furniture, burned it in the street and went away, scornfully flaunting as a trophy the colors of the Royal Artillery Regiment that the truculent major adorned. The whereabouts of the truculent one while this was going on are not revealed, but it is fairly certain that he was not visible in the neighborhood.

These ceremonies having been satisfactorily concluded, the citizens went home and to bed.[1]

If they had done nothing else, they had terrified poor prim Colden. Next day he posted notice that he would have nothing farther to do with the stamps but would leave the whole issue to be dealt with by his successor, Sir Henry Moore, then on the sea coming to assume office. Meantime, lest there should be another attempt of a more violent nature on the fort, he delivered the hated stamps into the custody of the corporation of the city of New York and having washed his hands of the whole business probably was able to get a night's sleep.

[1] Stone, p. 201.

Moore was of an amiable and conciliatory spirit and made every effort to placate the citizens, but nothing could change their resolution not to allow the stamps to be used. In his own turn, Moore himself, for all his able and honest efforts to bring about a better understanding, became frightened at the evidence of a profound and determined spirit of revolt. Threats, sometimes veiled and sometimes open, but always unmistakable, were continually made to the Assembly by the plebeian part of the people. At last came complete surrender. The stamps were taken from the boxes of the corporation and publicly burned before all men's eyes. On March 18, 1766, after a year of futile struggle, the British Parliament repealed the Stamp Act.[1]

The foolish and the febrile rejoiced with an exceeding joy, but not the Sons of Liberty, Sears, Lamb and MacDougall. They observed what the foolish and febrile overlooked. With the repeal of the act, Parliament had expressly reiterated its right and purpose to tax the colonies, and reasoning persons saw that the struggle was only postponed. Their better judgment was quickly vindicated. On the echo of the repeal Parliament passed the Mutiny Act, which provided for quartering troops upon the colonies at the expense of the people the troops were employed to overawe.

This was really a graver matter than the stamps. It not only trampled across a cherished principle but it abraded an old sore. The matter had come up in the French and Indian War when Lord Loudoun,

[1] Stone, p. 207.

a beef-witted martinet, had all but declared war on New York because it declined to take his soldiers into its houses.[1] When an attempt was made now to enforce this style of governmental blundering, the Assembly, goaded thereto by the Sons of Liberty, refused to appropriate a stiver for the support of the troops.

For this it had good show of reasons. Incidentally, nearly all the space on what is now the north side of Chambers Street between Park Row and Broadway was filled with barracks that afforded sufficient quarters for any fair number of soldiers, and the order to provide for them otherwise was nothing but a brandishing of the club.

More trouble was on the fire. In a short time Parliament made good the threat with which it had repealed the Stamp Act. It passed a new bill shifting taxes from paper to glass, painter's colors, tea and some other things. Apparently the fatuous legislators had conceived the notion that a tax on glass would be all right where one on paper would raise a whirlwind.

But the just men among the colonists were not contending for a mere right to use unstamped paper. Avowedly and first of all they were, of course, asserting as a principle that if the colonies were to be taxed they must tax themselves. This, being a matter of bookkeeping, might never have quickened the pulses of one just come from the broader struggle of Poland, when he should learn of it. But what was worth his attention, and no doubt had it, was the

[1] Booth, Vol. I, pp. 391-2.

underlying conviction of the MacDougalls, Searses and Lambs that Britain did not and could not understand them. To this in the view of some of the inhabitants the issue whether they should pay for their own gagging at the hands of troops seemed of less importance. But the Mutiny Act, like the Stamp Act before it, was a good enough occasion for a sortie. When these influences had induced the Assembly to refuse to pay, Parliament on May 22, 1767, passed in revenge an act suspending the Assembly until it should comply with the act about the soldiery.

The Assembly purposed to pay no attention to this new outburst of hebetude and would probably have been marched out of its chamber at the point of the bayonet if the governor had not exercised his prerogative by dissolving the legislative part of the propulsion and issuing writs for a new election.

It was this election that changed the aspect of affairs in the colony and eventually brought the quarrel from the stage of words to the stage of blows.

From the start it was bitterly contested. All the force of the home government was put forth to defeat the infamous radicals and trouble-makers. Under careful guidance and encouragement a rift that had appeared in the ranks of the protesting colonists was widened. It had something to do with race prejudice, always prolific of evil, and something to do with caste, still worse. There had been from the first in New York a strong British element that had sided with the government and opposed the disruptive forces of the Sons of Liberty. It was composed of the wealthy, the socially prominent, or near-promi-

nent, the men of finance and the important merchants. It was not to be denied that most of the rebellious element were below this, being printers, hand-workers, small tradesmen and so on,[1] including most of the Dutch, toward whom the British felt then as their descendants felt toward Napoleon forty years later.

The stand-pat element joined with the governmental party to win the election. New York has since seen a thousand hotly fought battles of this kind but not many wherein the feeling went higher. It was contested on uneven terms. There was no universal suffrage; many of the revolutionary element could not vote at all.

In a way the election went against the radical hope.[2] The conservatives succeeded in displacing six of the delegates that had stood against the Mutiny Act and thus was brought in a strong pro-British contingent led by James De Lancey.

It was a different Assembly that began its session April 4, 1769. The old spirit of opposition had vanished. The De Lanceys, the Crugers and the other aristocrats dominated everything. Members not of their own superior status they terrorized or silenced. So far as the Assembly was concerned, the Revolution stopped on a dead center. Alone among these jellyfish sat one man, Philip John Schuyler, descendant of that Philip Bietersen Van Schuyler that had been in earlier days a leader of the Dutch. Inheritor of a magnificent tradition of sturdy independence,

[1] Lossing, p. 32.
[2] Stone, pp. 218-9; Booth, Vol. II, pp. 443-4.

he sat there the lone representative of insurrection, voted against every reactionary proposal and fought the backward tide that was sweeping over the colony.

Outwardly, the spirit of 1765 that had resisted the Stamp Act was strangely dead. One might say that the canny New Yorker of that day, the man that was heard and seen, put everything upon the basis of profit and loss. So long as the British government threatened his pocketbook he was resentful and ready to applaud the effigy-burners and the torch-light paraders—look out of his window and laugh and clap hands. But when the tax had been repealed he cared nothing for the principle that condemned all these excursions into the Middle Ages, and with a natural joy he reverted to law and order.

This was not true of the whole population but it was certainly true enough of the respectable element. A feeling had grown up that the MacDougall and Sears people had gone too far. Even aside from the aristocratic De Lanceys and Crugers, men said that it was all well enough to oppose taxation without representation, because for that existed sound and respectable precedent, but to resist the authority of the king's troops—that sounded too much like Jack Cade and Wat Tyler and those other low persons. Division slowly split its way across the ranks that had fought the Stamp Act and signed the non-importation agreement. Two factions arose, the Patricians and the Tribunes.[1] Men of position and eminence were ill-content to be associated with mechanics. The Patricians declined into a lukewarm

[1] Lossing, p. 32.

support of the original cause, then into a state of acquiescence with the orders from above, and finally into a condition that produced some of the finest specimens of old-style mossbacked Toryism ever seen in America.

But there was never any doubt as to where the Sons of Liberty stood about these issues. They were all Tribunes and ran with the common ruck. With diligence and research they strove to make life unhappy for members of the government and often succeeded to the full of their hopes. Isaac Sears, John Lamb and Alexander MacDougall were ably supported in these endeavors by Marinus Willett, Gershom Mott, Flores Bancker and Edward Laight, some of whose names are still embalmed in the streets of old New York.

A few months later they had a chance to learn whether the reactionaries really controlled colony and city. Governor Moore died on September 11, 1769, and again came into power the gloomy and half-witted Colden, who had fled to the fort at the time of the Stamp Act excitement. When the Assembly reconvened it provided for the issuing of one hundred and twenty thousand pounds of paper money and then brought the main issue straight home by dutifully and submissively voting two thousand pounds for the support of the overawing troops.

Philip John Schuyler alone voted No.

This was on December 15. On the morning of the 16th the citizens of New York were astonished to see on all the dead walls and bulkheads a flaming poster addressed "To the Betrayed Inhabitants of the City

and Colony of New York," and savagely denouncing the Assembly for its surrender on the question of supporting the troops. The vote, the unknown author said, was an explicit acknowledgment of the validity of that authority the colony had so long protested against, the authority imposed upon it without its consent. The troops that the people's money would support were not sent to defend the people but to enslave them. Other colonies had shown enough spirit to repudiate this attempt. Should New York bow the neck in the presence of its more patriotic neighbors? The vote, moreover, was corrupt. It was the result of a detestable bargain entered into between the executive and the aristocratic element in the Assembly, by which the rights of the people were betrayed.

The Assembly looked upon this with a mild astonishment but did nothing. The next morning appeared a new placard of a more vehement tone but evidently from the same hand.[1] It ran thus:

"To the Public

"The spirit of the times renders it necessary for the inhabitants of the city to convene, in order effectually to avert the destructive consequences of the late BASE INGLORIOUS conduct of our General Assembly, who have in opposition to the loud and general voice of their constituents, the dictates of sound policy, the ties of gratitude, and the glorious struggle we have engaged in for our invaluable birthrights, dared to vote supplies for the troops

[1] Booth, Vol. II, p. 444; *The Old Martyrs' Prison.*

without the least shadow of a pretext for their pernicious grant.

"The most eligible place will be in the Fields, near Mr. De La Montaigne's, and the time—between 10 and 11 o'clock this morning, where we doubt not every friend to his country will attend.

"LEGION."

They met accordingly and heard speeches bitterly denouncing the Assembly and upholding the popular cause. John Lamb then put the question whether the action of the Assembly in regard to the troops should be approved. There broke from the crowd a unanimous and thundering "No!" and a committee was appointed to convey this resolution to the Assembly.

John Lamb, Isaac Sears, Alexander MacDougall, Caspar Wistar, Jacobus Van Zandt, Samuel Broome, Erasmus Williams and James Van Vaurk were the members.[1] They went before the Assembly and made their protest. But James De Lancey had moved to forestall these rude plebeians. The first thing in the morning he laid the offending placard before the Assembly and moved that it constituted an infamous and scandalous libel. The sheeplike Assembly voted that this was so, Philip John Schuyler alone voting No. Another resolution was then passed denouncing in other and still more eloquent terms placard and author and asking Colden the dumb to offer a reward of one hundred and fifty pounds to unmask the traitorous hand.

Three days later they had John Lamb haled before

[1] Booth, Vol. II, p. 445.

their august presence on the charge that he was the guilty wretch. For a time hope ran high in the Tory bosom that this pestilent person was at last about to have his deserts, but he slipped out of the net by proving that he had known nothing about the placard until he read it upon the walls.

In this way the situation drifted along, the Assembly fretting and fuming, the one hundred and fifty pounds of reward hanging unclaimed above the unknown head of the irreverent author and the feeling between the plebeians and the soldiers greatly irritated by the total proceedings. The people hated the soldiers they were thus obliged to support and the soldiers returned the hatred in kind and with additions of their own.

At the time of all the febrility about the repeal of the Stamp Act, before people had learned about the Mutiny Act and some other things, the supervolatile had erected a pole "sacred to Pitt and Liberty." On January 12, 1770, when a month of diligent sleuthing had failed to discover the author of the infamous and scandalous placard, a group of soldiers belonging to the Sixteenth Regiment, His Britannic Majesty's Guards, thought the time ripe to express their sentiments likewise and started with gunpowder and ax to destroy this liberty pole. Citizens gathered and remonstrated. The soldiers fixed bayonets, charged, and drove the crowd into a tavern that was a kind of headquarters of the Sons of Liberty and therefore hateful to the loyal element. The soldiers amused themselves by breaking in the tavern windows and burning up some of the furniture.

That night and the next these bickerings were renewed. On the night of January 14 the soldiers returned, cut the pole down, sawed it into lengths and deposited the fragments neatly piled across the door of the tavern.[1]

The citizens made the next play. A crowd said to number three thousand held an impromptu indignation meeting over the remains of the pole and adopted resolutions declaring that thereafter all soldiers found in the streets after the evening roll-call should be treated as public enemies, and pledging themselves to see that this edict should be vigorously enforced.

The redcoats or their officers now resorted on their own account to the placard game and made a good fist at it. The next morning the citizens read without joy a series of placards adorning the dead walls and ridiculing the attempt to restrain with resolutions the soldiers of the king.

Isaac Sears came upon three soldiers in the act of posting up this expressive document. He summoned the citizens and attacked the redcoats. The crowd waxed rapidly; in a short time it far outnumbered the soldiers, then it overmastered them and was conducting them as prisoners to the mayor's office to be arraigned, when at the corner of John and Cliff streets a squad of twenty soldiers that had in some way heard of the plight of their comrades came running to help in the uproar. The citizens armed with clubs made a furious assault. The soldiers fought back with cutlasses and guns. How the fray might

[1] Booth, Vol. II, p. 447.

have ended no one can guess, for the infuriated crowd increased momentarily and although one of them had been killed and many wounded they only pressed on the more vigorously. But when the soldiers were sullenly retreating before superior numbers their officers arrived on the scene, herded them into the barracks and prevented farther loss of life.[1]

This was the battle of Golden Hill, January 16, 1770, and the first blood shed in the American Revolution.[2] You can see today a tablet that marks the spot.

The next three days were full of interest for the regiments of British infantry that happened to be in those parts. Plain citizens of New York antedated by about a century and a half the Fuzzy Wuzzy state of mind in regard to these venerable institutions. Perhaps it is not fair to say they did not give a damn. What they gave was brickbats, clubs and refuse. Wherever a soldier's head could be seen the favorite proceeding was to hit it with whatever was handy. On January 20 the mayor put the period on these entertainments by a proclamation strictly forbidding soldiers to leave their barracks unless accompanied by officers, non-commissioned or otherwise, and after that a semblance of peace settled once more upon the troubled precincts of Cherry Hill and vicinity.[3]

Morally and otherwise, victory perched upon the banners of the Sons of Liberty, who had conducted most of the fighting. On February 5 they flung de-

[1] Booth, Vol. II, pp. 447-451.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 453. The Boston Massacre came nearly two months later.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 453.

fiance at the hated foe by erecting another pole, inscribed to Liberty and Property. This time they made fairly sure that being up it would stay up. They had thoughtfully bought the ground upon which they erected it and as the soldiery did not quite dare to invade private property the pole stood unmolested for the next six years.

But if the breaking of soldiers' heads ceased to be for a while the popular outdoor sport of the city, the feeling of revolt did not die down but was presently fanned to another outburst by events that intimately concerned a friend of Haym Salomon and multiplied the battlings into which he stepped when he came ashore that autumn day of 1772.

CHAPTER IV

Things the Hessians Learned

MEANTIME, the sleuth-hounds of the government were upon the trail of the villain that had written the infamous and scandalous libel on the Assembly.

In their search they now resorted to reasoning processes, a thing in itself remarkable enough to demand notice. The placard had been printed. To print there must be a printer. A printer printed with type. In those days type was hand-cut and not uniform. Diligent comparison of types used in the few printing offices then existent in the city led the sleuths to the door of one James Parker, who, being confronted with the placard, displayed the pallid face and trembling lip of guilt, or something to that effect. Being next favored with a view of imprisonment and himself on the way to be hanged for treason felony, he collapsed and confessed that the iniquitous thing had indeed issued from his shop but he was innocent of its authorship.

The abandoned scoundrel was Alexander MacDougall.

Thirty minutes later this Son of Liberty occupied a cell in the New Gaol.

Thence he was brought before the Assembly to

answer at the bar for his misconduct. With a cool insolence that seems to have driven the De Lanceys to the verge of madness he refused to plead anything, refused to consider bail, denied jurisdiction, and was thrust back into his cell.

There now ensued a singular chapter of history. As soon as his imprisonment was known to the common people, they resorted by the hundreds to the neighborhood of the jail where they marched up and down singing songs in the prisoner's honor and shouting words of encouragement and admiration.[1] All day and most of the night this continued. The authorities thought, no doubt, that in accordance with the usual instability of mob emotion, the demonstration would be an affair of a few hours. Then quiet would be restored, and the necessary processes for the punishment of crime could be resumed. In the most respectable circles it was confidently hoped that the prisoner was on his way to be hanged.

Instead of quieting down the uproar grew always worse. To the Tribunes, the Sons of Liberty and others of the order of base mechanicals, MacDougall was the hero of the times. They called upon him in such numbers that he was obliged to post reception hours. They filled his cell with flowers; also with substantial food and the delicacies of the season, so that he was not only well fed himself but able to improve the dietary of other prisoners, a benefaction much needed. The volunteer MacDougall Guards still held the road in front of the prison, still singing songs. When they had exhausted the music of their

[1] Booth, Vol. II, pp. 443-6, 456. *The Old Martyrs' Prison.*

repertoire they composed new melodic offerings and sang them. They wore MacDougall colors in the streets, and those that were able carried swords or walking canes with MacDougall's name on them, displaying these thoughtfully where they were likely to do the most good to men of doubtful minds and cautious spirits.[1] And finally they formed a MacDougall league or society that bore the name of the "Forty-Five," a fact that merits an explanation.

In those days the hero of all men everywhere that had so much as a glimmering notion of liberty was John Wilkes, abhorred and still maligned by reactionaries. In the famous Number Forty-Five of his "North Briton," Wilkes had printed the article criticizing the king's speech for which he had been imprisoned in the Tower of London. The fierce controversy next ensuing between the reactionaries that assailed Wilkes and the forward-looking men that defended him, had spread around the world. Wherever it went it became the sign of a fundamental and inevitable struggle. Nowhere more than in the colony of New York where it strung the Sons of Liberty like a tonic. Holt's newspaper of February 15 says:

> On February 14, the forty-fifth day of the year, forty-five gentlemen, friends of Captain MacDougall and to the glorious cause of American Liberty, went in decent procession to the New Gaol and dined with him upon forty-five pounds of beefsteaks cut from a bullock forty-five months old.

As a means of registering the emotions of sympathy and the exaltations of liberty, this seems to stand alone in our records.

[1] *The Old Martyrs' Prison.*

On March 19, the Sons of Liberty met in their own house, (which they had bought for $3,000 that they might have a meeting place secure from the interference of the military,) drank forty-five popular toasts and marched to the jail, where they gave forty-five cheers for MacDougall and went home content. The beverage in which the toasts were drunk is not stated in any authority I have been able to consult. It is deplorable how often these old chroniclers left out the most important items.

The authorities seem to have known little about the people they were appointed to rule. Days passed and the rugged resolution to make an uproar about MacDougall held on much the same. There was in it a touch of almost religious tenacity that might have instructed these dullards if they had been capable of tuition. Golden Hill was not so far away but they could easily recall it. At last, in April, the situation in nowise bettering, bail was again suggested to the doughty captain. He thought he had registered enough of a protest and this time consented to furnish security. Whereupon he came forth and resumed his place and activities among the Sons of Liberty. Loud threats had been made that nevertheless he was still to be prosecuted vigorously; so vile an affront to His Majesty's officers was not to be allowed to go unpunished. All this proved but an empty vaunt. The authorities did not dare to risk another Zenger case. Quietly the indictment was allowed to lapse.[1]

The strangest thing about all this is that the insurgents were a minority of the inhabitants; the

[1] Booth, Vol. II, p. 461; *The Old Martyrs' Prison.*

majority was composed of the law-abiding, the conservative and loyal, and had been from the beginning. So long as the conflict centered around taxation and money, enough loyalists could be induced or intimidated to join with the lower classes and make a formidable shouting. When it passed from purses to principle, the Sons of Liberty must fight upstream.

This was now more than ever apparent. MacDougall, Sears, Lamb and Willett continued their agitations;[1] the element that had drawn away from them became daily more aloof or hostile. It was evident to anybody able to think that of all this disturbance, if it should continue, there could be but one end, and the respectable people were not prepared to face life in a republic.

Salomon stood with the agitators. His superiority of business endowment is sufficiently proved by the fact that despite the odium that this must necessarily have brought down upon him his broker's office throve and he won respect. Upon his arrival he had made the acquaintance of the family of Moses Benjamin Franks,[2] an influential Jewish merchant that had a notable lineage. He was descended from that Aaron Franks so wise and useful a friend to the Electors of Hanover. When George I came to be crowned at Westminster, King of England, he had furnished the jewels to adorn that porcine monarch. Salomon was captivated with the beauty and good sense of Rachel, the eldest daughter of the Franks household, and after some months began to pay open court to her, a courtship destined to a somewhat

[1] Booth, Vol. II, p. 455.

[2] *Jewish Encyclopedia.*

troubled history. Rachel had a brother named Isaac, who wholly sympathized with Haym about the cause of the colonists, in which he was himself to play a distinguished part—in a province where at the time no Jew was allowed to vote.

Other colonies were more fortunate and more virile, but in New York the cause dragged on for three years, the reactionaries in control, the British troops swarming in the streets, the knot of rebels that centered around the Sons of Liberty losing no chance to protest and none to ridicule the preposterous arrangement.[1] For men of the Sears and MacDougall type the ceaseless squabble was all in the day's work. They had started out to oppose the monarchical order and they kept on opposing it. But for men like Haym Salomon and his fellows, every step they took with the forces of protest was a step out of their way. The fact has a certain deep-based historical value aside from its personal interest. There could be no better revelation of character and hardly a better light upon the real nature of the conflict.

We may as well have now a few words on this subject. In recent years a fashion has grown up of belittling the American Revolution and the men that took part in it. One impulse to these detractions may be gathered from the ecstatic reception in England of all persons willing to write them. But if any need exists of renewing faith in the sincerity of the Revolutionists and in the worth of their cause, enough can be found in the attraction the contest had for

[1] At the time of the agitation about the tea tax, Sandy Hook pilots refused to bring in vessels that carried the obnoxious tea. Booth, pp. 466-8.

intelligent and reasoning Jews. They had in their blood this love of liberty as a principle; they had this inborn hatred of oppression. The two thousand that had been burned in Cadiz, the four hundred that had been burned in Seville, the thousands that had been tortured, pursued, afflicted, robbed, beaten and bound—Jews of a later day had the fate of them all in brain and heart-beat. Exile and its bitter bread had drilled into their very souls how precious a thing is freedom. It appears that among them were minds unusually keen, reflective and discerning. The gratuitous assumption that men like Lafayette, de Kalb, Armand, Pulaski, Kosciusko and others were drawn to the conflict by a mere love of adventure breaks down when we try to apply it to men like Haym Salomon. The only adventure promised in their case was an imminent prospect of business ruin and the only advantage the chance of the New Gaol. It is manifest that they threw themselves into the American revolt because it was in the line of their convictions and equally evident that such men could not be moved to support a cause of which the leading exponents were unworthy.

We have few details of Salomon's activities for the next two years after 1773, but there is startling evidence as we shall see that he made himself obnoxious to the British-Tory cabal.

The battles of Lexington and Bunker Hill and the events following them placed in an exceedingly awkward position men in New York that thought to support the king and still not to break with their countrymen. Under a double pressure, that from the

ill-mannered Sons of Liberty on one side and on the other the fear of seeming to desert their fellow colonists, they had formed a Provincial Congress [1] for the State of New York, which was supposed to supersede the old Assembly and all other authority. It was fumbling about between loyalty and revolt in a manner that seems now the limit of weak-minded futility. For months what went on was like a section of comic opera of no high order of merit. "Good Lord, Good Devil," it might justly have been called. Gentlemen with the mien of men and the hearts of chickens prayed one day that the colonists might win and the next that the old order might be restored. The last act of the old Assembly had been to send to the British government a humble and dutiful petition declaring submission and asking for better treatment. Men sat in the new Provincial Congress who had tricked themselves into the belief that something might still come of that soft emollient. Anything was better than separation—and a fight.

Before long their course led them, as might have been expected, up the last attainable summits of absurdity. George Washington had been appointed commander-in-chief of the forces for the defense of the colonies. He had left Virginia and was on his way to take his command before Boston, where the Americans had General Howe in a trap. It was Washington's intention as he passed to visit New York and learn the situation there. At the moment that he was approaching the city, Tryon, the royal governor, who had gone to England to consult the

[1] Booth, Vol. II, p. 479.

government about the insubmissive colonists, was returning and had already come up to Sandy Hook. There was every indication that as General Washington landed from the North River, Governor Tryon would be coming ashore at the Battery.

The emergency, we are told, shook with intolerable alarms many a feeble bosom among our best citizens. Which should have the official reception—representative of the king or representative of the rebels against the king? At last a compromise was effected, and nothing could better illustrate the divided state of the popular mind in New York or the prevalence of a congenital flabbiness. The Sons of Liberty welcomed George Washington, and the Sons of Royal Ramrods welcomed Tryon.[1] It would seem as if the city authorities might have had enough of the sporting instinct to leave the issue to a throw of dice, at least, if they could do nothing more manly. Instead, they arranged, in the most despicable manner, that the militia should be ordered out and that reception honors should be paid to whichever of the two distinguished visitors, rebel or royalist, should arrive first.

Washington had that good fortune, if such it might be called. On June 25 he reached Newark, New Jersey, while Tryon's ship was still windbound in the Lower Bay. Fate had decided what the supine minds of the Provincial Congress were unable to determine. They sent a delegation to Newark to meet Washington, where the President of the Congress delivered to him a laudatory address, so worded that

[1] Booth, Vol. II, pp. 486-7.

it could be read either as insurrectionary or loyal as the next turn of the wheel might require, a triumph of verbal athletics that has had too little attention. Washington entered the city about noon, was received with honors by the militia, appointed Philip John Schuyler, the intransigeant of the old Assembly, to the command of the city, and went on his way. A few hours after he had left, Tryon landed, and was received with the same honors by the same militia and by the mayor and the Common Council, who fondly assured him that their hearts beat true to royalty and ever should.[1]

This style of slack-wire balancing did not last long. There stood at the foot of Broadway the Battery of immemorial fame. It contained twenty-one cannon, the correct number for a royal salute. The Provincial Congress, doubtless under the stiffening influence of Philip John Schuyler, ordered the cannon removed. Schuyler regarded them as a menace to the patriotic party and believed they would be useful to defend the region above New York.

In the North River, a short distance away, lay the British man-of-war *Asia,* with her guns pointed at the lower part of the city. The militia could not be depended upon for any such work as that of removing the guns, nor indeed for anything else more serious than parading, presenting arms and valiant trencher service. Volunteers were called for. The Sons of Liberty responded. Led by John Lamb they swarmed down to the Battery and began to take away the guns.

[1] Booth, Vol. II, p. 487; Lossing, p. 38.

The commander of the *Asia* was quickly aware of this move, and the guns that for days had been trained on the city were turned upon the Battery and began to fire.[1] It was the baptism of the Sons. Afterward they recalled with pride that none of them flinched and the work of removal went steadily on. Among those that labored at it was young Alexander Hamilton. The marksmanship on the *Asia* was true to tradition. The balls from her guns plowed up the earth and knocked over trees but hit none of the Sons of Liberty, who stripped the Battery of every gun.

It was the last scene in the ridiculous farce of that day; Governor Tryon took fright at the overt act of the gun removal and lost no time in fleeing for safety aboard the *Asia*. When he had abandoned the government he left no excuse for any one to attempt the playing of a double rôle. The out-and-out Tories fled or shut themselves in their houses and the weaker among them hoisted American colors.

The Sons' day of triumph was not long. General Howe, driven out of Boston, concentrated British hopes and power upon New York, well known to be at heart much more loyal. Washington with his raw levies and undisciplined troops moved to meet him. The Americans lost the battle of Long Island and the city was open to the British entry. Washington and Greene, we are told, wished to burn it before it should be evacuated, so as to leave the British nothing but ashes. For this Washington has been criticized,[2] but

[1] Lossing, p. 39.

[2] The criticism, chiefly due to Lecky, still continues. The critics overlook the fact that the British had burned Charlestown to prevent it from falling

what he planned was only in accordance with the principles of war. The Provincial Congress, which at all times seems to have needed foot-warmers and vertebræ, was stricken with horror at the thought of such destruction of property and on September 15, 1776, General Sir William Howe, afterward Lord Howe, with the British troops came in and took possession.

Five days later the idea that Washington and Greene had entertained was carried out by design or chance, nobody knows which. In the middle of the night, a fire started in a drinking place in lower Broad Street. The wind was southerly and for weeks there had been a drought. Most of the houses were of wood. The flames went from one tinder box to another, up Broad Street to Beaver, to Broadway, and up Broadway clear to King's College, where the open spaces stopped the conflagration. More than four hundred buildings had been destroyed.[1]

The origin of the fire was laid to such of the Sons of Liberty as had remained in the city. What they had to do with it is mere guesswork. The English soldiers believed it was all incendiary and adopted the plan of killing on the spot every person found with anything in his clothing with which he could strike a light. Also of killing others on other pretexts. Possibly they killed persons that might have revealed the truth about this chapter of history. There are on record stories of inflammable materials gathered where they would most usefully spread the

into the hands of the Americans—not to mention their exploits with the torch at Norfolk and Falmouth.

[1] Stone, pp. 250-3; Booth, 540-1.

flames and of men from whom the soldiers wrung alleged confessions. But similar stories attend every such conspicuous event even in these days.

A quarter of the city had been burned, whatever the source of the fire, and the wrath of the British commander fell on the available rebels, and with others, so nearly as we can now make out, upon Haym Salomon. The exact nature of the charge against him is hopelessly lost. As he was an intimate friend and associate of the hated MacDougall,[1] possibly nothing else was needed. That he should have stayed behind when the rest of his associates, even to the rabbi of his congregation, had gone with the open rebels was in itself highly suspicious. A man of his affiliations would be likely to be suspected about that fire affair. On September 22 he was arrested at his house and thrust into one of the prisons rapidly filling with others that like him had stood with the insurrection. It is not known in which of these citadels he was first confined but there is reason to believe it was what was known as the Livingston or Old Sugar House, which stood in what is now Liberty Street. It appears that this was a kind of clearing house where suspected persons were first sent until their degree of guilt could be determined.

Military prisons are among the oldest and most familiar of all subjects of the pen denunciatory. There probably was never a war that did not have its tales of horror about such places. That men having their deadly enemies unarmed and wholly at their mercy should treat them like sworn brothers is

[1] Sparks MS. The fact is frequently referred to elsewhere.

asking too much of human nature. On the other hand complaints about military prisons are usually much exaggerated; the mad passions that war awakes are not exactly suited to that calm and judicial frame of mind in which men weigh out actualities and arrive at truths. In the case of the war prisons maintained by the British one can, if one chooses, disregard all contemporaneous testimonies and opinion and consider only the statistics. There was that old dismantled line-of-battle ship, the *Jersey,* turned into a prison hulk and anchored in the East River. Most of the prisoners confined on her were young men, most had the robust constitutions that pertain to outdoor life. Eleven thousand, five hundred of them died on the *Jersey* and were buried or half-buried in the mud of Wallabout.[1]

These are the records. They seem to reveal the war prison of that day as no better than a machine for large-scale murder. When we have made all possible deductions, allowances and concessions, the certainty remains that life in such places must have been led in an extravagance of horror.

War is based upon hatred; of all wars the hatreds developed in civil wars are notoriously the worst. This was, in a way, a civil war. The savage maltreatment of prisoners within the British lines had long been complained of. One of the Americans, or near Americans, that had undergone captivity was General Charles Lee, of unhappy memory. He was locked up in the old city hall. As he had once been a com-

[1] In the New York Public Library, New York City Room, is an interesting collection of letters from surviving prisoners on the *Jersey,* but the authority most often referred to is the diary of Fox.

missioned officer in the British army the British prepared to hang him as a deserter and doubtless would have done so but for Washington. When he heard of this genial purpose he wrote to Howe one of his grim letters in which he says:

"I will not undertake to determine what may be justifiable among yourselves, but I must give you warning that Major General Lee is looked upon as an officer belonging to and under the protection of the United Independent States of America, and that any violence you may commit upon his life and liberty will be severely retaliated upon the lives or liberties of the British officers, or those of their foreign allies in our hands." He goes on then to speak in severe condemnation of the treatment other American prisoners were receiving from British jailors. Some had recently made their escape and related the most harrowing details of their experiences, which their physical condition amply confirmed. Then Washington adds: "I would beg that some certain rule of conduct toward prisoners may be settled; and, if you are determined to make captivity as distressing as possible, let me know it, that we may be upon equal terms, for your conduct shall regulate mine."[1]

The Livingston or Liberty Street Sugar House seems to have been fairly efficient in the work of disposing of rebels, though in this line of endeavor inferior to some others. Its specialty lay in the fact that it had no roof. The autumnal rains came on, the water ran from floor to floor until every prisoner

[1] Irving, *Life of Washington*, Vol. III, p. 13.

was soaked to the skin.[1] None was allowed to don dry clothing or to obtain shelter. The food in military prisons is always denounced and always will be. For reasons to be explained later the food in the New York prisons was necessarily of the worst.

Daily (or nightly), men that had been charged with treasonable correspondence or other misdeeds were led from these places and shot. Sometimes they were granted, as an empty privilege, a drumhead court martial of mere routine and foreknown decisions, and sometimes they were put out of the way without such idle formalities. The feeling was particularly high against persons that were supposed or imagined to have had share in causing the late fire. When Salomon's friends learned that he was in the Sugar House they must have given him up for lost.

For some days after his arrest nothing was done in his case, and according to tradition, which is unverified, he was next removed to the New Gaol, the place where Alexander MacDougall had held his receptions and partaken of the beefsteaks of the Forty-Five. The British had rechristened it The Provost because it was the jail directly under the control of their provost marshal. It had been erected in 1757 in what is now City Hall Park near what is now the corner of Park Row and Chambers Street. Medieval and European views of penology had governed its planning. The basement consisted of dungeons without access or openings from the outside. Above this,

[1] Elias Cornelius, M.D., *Journal of Elias Cornelius*, p. 4. He was a prisoner first at the Sugar House and then at The Provost and his testimony will again be referred to.

the three stories were apparently designed with care to afford the minimum of light and no ventilation at all. In those days the terrible and often fatal disease that was called jail fever was supposed to be inevitable and necessary in any prison. It resulted from lack of ventilation and from the incredible sanitation common in such places. A vast army of prisoners, innocent and guilty, had been slain by it before mankind began to suspect that jails could be maintained without it.

The Provost was the place reserved for the most hated of the Americans and for those set apart for extinction, whether with or without court-martial formalities. One report says Nathan Hale spent his last night in this place, but, all his papers and letters having been destroyed, the belief can never be verified. The notion had spread on good grounds that to be confined in The Provost meant an early death and what little hope had survived for Haym Salomon must have died out when it was known that he was lodged in this sinister place.

The days passed and while other prisoners were summoned at midnight and not again seen, Salomon remained alive. Apparently it was his versatility that saved him. Fighting for Britain in this war were thousands of Hessian mercenaries that knew not a word of English. With few exceptions, this was the case with their officers as with the privates. On the other hand, the British officer that knew any language but his own was rare and one that knew anything of German rarer still. Salomon could speak fluent German as well as French, Polish, Russian

and Italian.[1] As soon as the fact was discovered he was hailed as a godsend by the British. Every day it was necessary to communicate instructions to the Hessians and there had been scarcely a man in New York that could do it. Salomon was shifted into better quarters, received rations that were nearly or quite edible, the intention of shooting him, if ever entertained, was abandoned; and soon he was released on parole. Interpreters were too valuable to be shot.

Every day he was busy translating the orders of the British commanders and telling the Hessian privates (when he had a chance) things that were exceedingly useful to them. As his bonds were progressively relaxed he had larger opportunities to mingle with the foreigners and talk freely with them. If the British commanders had known what use he was making of his liberty they would have regretted that they had not shot him long before and so hastened to repair that oversight. For what he was continually instilling into the ears of his foreign friends was the suggestion that at the first opportunity they should resign—or desert.[2] No doubt he opened to them the boundless opportunities that lay in the new country, the freedom and comfort that would exist when the war should be over. It would be but natural if he told them things about the average condition of an American worker compared with a European in the same station that they must have heard with amazement. And we may suppose that he did not fail

[1] His Memorial to Congress.
[2] Memorial.

to point up for them their present situation, fighting for hire against a people struggling to be free.

He must have been of a persuasive eloquence, or perhaps the same suggestion was rife from other sources. Desertions and resignations among the Hessians began to be a problem for their officers and others. The great element in Pennsylvania's life and development that is known in the vernacular as Pennsylvania Dutch was reenforced with Hessians, through resignation, desertion, or release after capture in war.

It is evident that he was much at ease in these employments. His marriage with Rachel Franks had been delayed by his arrest and the troubles that had seemed to gather around him. It was now celebrated January 2, 1777.[1] He was also able to resume his activities in business, and of course the more he had of that the less liable he was to suspicion. A few relics remain of his transactions. On November 19, 1777, he signed two receipts to Thomas Wilten of New York, one for 11 pounds, 18 shillings, in payment of seventeen barrels of salt and the other for 13 pounds, 10 shillings, in payment of twenty barrels of coarse salt.[2]

On January 12 and again on January 19, 1778, he advertised in the "New York Gazette and Weekly Advertiser" that he had for sale at 222 Broad Street, near the Post Office, ship's bread and fresh rice. By June 18 of that year he had moved his place of business to 245 Broad Street near the City Hall and

[1] The original *ketubah* or marriage certificate is in the possession of the American Jewish Historical Society.

[2] These receipts are in the possession of the New York Historical Society.

advertised white wine and vinegar. "Captains of ships and others," he said, "can depend upon being supplied on most reasonable terms."

The British authorities evidently allowed these performances, but if they had been wiser they would have had a sharper eye upon this man. For more reasons than I have mentioned they might have carried out their first purpose to shoot him. Next to spreading disaffection among the Hessians, his chief interest was to abet the plans of American prisoners that tried or hoped for a living exit from captivity.[1] In all likelihood he had become a familiar figure to the sentries, going in and out without the password, a trusty among the rebels and regarded by the British officers he was assisting as almost one of themselves. We know from his own curt admission that he continued to help American prisoners to escape, though he does not tell us how. The Sugar House was not far away. Now and then a prisoner managed to slip out of its gloomy recesses. The natural, or maybe the only, way for Salomon to help would be to use his house as a hiding place for such a fugitive until a chance came to flit across the river or to the American lines at the north. After Washington had outwitted Howe at White Plains and withdrawn through New Jersey, the British vigilance in New York was much relaxed and evidently from the advertisements Salomon was going to and fro unquestioned and unobserved.

In this way another year passed. For the Americans a gloomy black period of the struggle had been

[1] Memorial.

survived. The Continental Congress had been belabored into some sense of common effort and was beginning to make an army. The sun of Saratoga had shone beneficently. June 18, 1778, the British had evacuated Philadelphia and, while crossing New Jersey, Washington had struck them the staggering blow of Monmouth. The easy security with which the British had enjoyed life in New York came to an unpleasant stop. There were reports that Washington was gathering a force to attack the city. After the disaster at Saratoga anything was possible. The spies were abroad again and so were the rumors.

Salomon, although he had returned to his business, continued to act as interpreter and secret desertion agent among the Hessians. His first child had just been born. The tradition is that on an evening [1] early in August, 1778, a clattering sound was heard in front of the house he occupied for residence and office, a file of soldiers grounded arms, and a sergeant opened the door with the news that Haym Salomon was again under arrest. Within an hour he was back in his old quarters in The Provost.

Word had reached Sir Henry Clinton that the depraved Washington had revived his wicked scheme to burn the city, or at least the wharves, warehouses, and British shipping. British views about the wickedness of burning things underwent much change forty years later when they had the White House

[1] This seems to be a probable surmise. We have no documents bearing on the matter, but no reason appears to doubt the statements in his Memorial and other testimony. The fact of the second arrest as a spy seems certain. *Vide* Samuel Walker McCall, *The Patriotism of the American Jew,* pp. 86-7; Albert M. Friedenberg, *American Jewish Year Book* for 1926-7, pp. 210-12.

and the Capitol at their mercy, but being in New York in 1778 they thought it sounded the depth of infamy. The court martial and the firing squad were reserved for all that had been or could be implicated in the hellish plot. Haym Salomon was wanted as Washington's chief agent in it.[1]

[1] Sparks MS.; McCall, pp. 88-9; Friedenberg, as before cited; *Jewish Encyclopedia.*

CHAPTER V

A Flight in the Dark

FROM the beginning, New York under the British occupation had been a place of prisons. It is a side light on the Revolution that has been too much neglected. In virtually all cases, the unfortunate inmates of these dungeons could obtain their liberty by foreswearing their cause. They preferred to remain and endure the ingenious tortures of ruffians like the famous Sergeant Keefe. How in the face of this fact we can accept the new doctrine that the cause was trivial or related merely to a matter of tax-dodging, I know not. Any man had rather pay taxes than be starved or kicked to death. Besides which, there is another thought. The number of prisons was extraordinary. All kinds of large buildings had been commandeered to this use and in 1778 all were stuffed with victims. The Presbyterian Church at Park Row, Beekman and Nassau streets was full of them; so were the Middle Dutch Church in Nassau Street between Liberty and Cedar, the North Dutch Church in William Street between Fulton and Ann, the French Church at Pine and Nassau, the King's College buildings west of Broadway between Park Place and Murray Street, two sugar warehouses in what is now Liberty Street,

another sugar warehouse at Duane and William streets, the new Bridewell, some other places, and then the New Gaol, now called The Provost.[1] The rebels must have been strong in numbers, as well as firm of spirit.

Of all the prisons in the prison-infested city this was the worst and the most dreaded, this Provost. It was reserved for the punishment of the most conspicuous and most hated of the "damned rebels," and conclusive testimony to the efficiency of Salomon's efforts lies in the mere fact that he had earned this distinction. A man was in charge with a mind singularly fertile in expedients that would add to any prisoner's misery and as ruthless in carrying them out. His name, William Cunningham, was long pilloried in American history as representing a phenomenon in human depravity. If his own confession was true, his evil repute rested upon a basis of reality to make him a fit subject for the alienists. He arrived in America in 1774, and won to a speedy distinction by scurrilous comments on the Sons of Liberty, loudly expressed. The Sons took him in hand and compelled him to kneel and kiss the liberty pole. Charitable diagnosis of his case has assumed that his experiences wrought in him an insatiable frenzy for revenge, but this can hardly account for the other unpleasant fact that besides being a despot he was a thief. It appears that he enriched himself by selling the scanty rations allowed to the prisoners, leaving them to starve or to eat the indescribable carrion that he substituted for provisions. Not all the testi-

[1] *The Old Martyrs' Prison.*

mony to his abominations can be charged off to resentment and the passion of the times; the witnesses are too many, too respectable, too explicit, and too well reenforced by Cunningham himself. In him appeared that strange order of the human brute that being clothed with power, and safely out of the world's eyes, feeds the latent appetite for cruelty until it is obsessed by it and no longer sane. One of his delights was to sear prisoners with red-hot irons and another to order them beaten for trivial slips or none and then watch their sufferings.

Life in The Provost under this fiend was merely a form of assassination. The air was so foul that a medical authority wrote a book [1] upon it as a study in human endurance, and the place so horribly crowded that hundreds died "partly asphyxiated," says the report. Hundreds of others starved for want of the food that Cunningham stole and sold. It was his daily practice to become drunken at dinner and to have prisoners of rank brought out and paraded up and down before him and his guests while he berated and taunted them. Prisoners were not allowed to see relatives or friends; if sick they were not attended.

Fortunately we are not left to think these statements the leavings or even the excesses of propaganda. Some months before Haym Salomon became for the second time an inmate of The Provost there had been confined in its fetid caverns a man of the

[1] In the New York "Mirror" of September 10, 1837, appeared a letter written by John Pintard, a survivor of The Provost giving a vivid description of life there under Cunningham and confirming the worst that has been said of him.

highest character who kept a diary of his experiences, and this sure and terrible testimony to the price of patriotism is still available for the curious. Elias Cornelius was his name; a physician of standing in Connecticut. He was serving as a captain in the American army and was stationed with his company and others in the neighborhood of East Chester. While doing scout duty, August 22, 1777, he ventured incautiously too near the British lines and was captured. He was immediately robbed of everything of value including most of his clothes and in little more than shirt and trousers hustled to New York.

There he was at first confined in this same old Livingston sugar house, one of the two such structures that stood in what is now Liberty Street.[1] His diary recites in brief but convincing entries the progress of his miseries. He confirms the absence of a roof to the sugar house and the intense sufferings of the inmates, who were drenched whenever rain fell and compelled to dry their wet garments by wearing them. The food here was shocking but not so bad as that at The Provost, to which he was presently removed. At The Provost the nominal rations were two pounds of pork and two pounds of bread weekly for each prisoner.[2] This would have been scanty provender if it had been edible, but the things Cunningham substituted no human being could swallow.

Although Cornelius was a physician he was not

[1] John Paulding, whom we are to encounter again in this narrative, was twice a prisoner in New York, once in the North Dutch Church, once in the Sugar House.

[2] *The Old Martyrs' Prison;* Cornelius, *Journal.*

allowed to minister to his sick or wounded fellow prisoners. Once he learned that in the basement dungeons were many that had been brought in wounded and were not allowed to have medical attention. He made up packets of lint and ointment, wrote directions for their use, and threw them down the chimney in the hope that they might reach and help the sufferers. Then he took the scurvy himself and came near dying.

It is a stirring story, all the better because it is so artless and unpremeditated. His family was Tory; his father came and tried to induce him to desert the American cause and enlist with the British, when with a commission and good pay all his troubles would be over. He adhered to the faith he had professed. He says he fully expected to die under Cunningham but to die as an American.

The scurvy was really the saving of him. Because he had Tory connections he was taken to hospital quarters from which he managed at night a daring escape. By luck and adroitness he got past the sentries, eluded his pursuers and plunged into the woods and open country that were then the upper part of Manhattan. Once he emerged into an opening where in the moonlight he could plainly be seen, but got through by crawling on his stomach. He reached the East River, by strange means got across it, lived for weeks in the woods of Long Island,[1] made his way across the Sound and finally rejoined his regiment.

His diary must relate a condition well-known, for it appears that the inhuman treatment of American

[1] *Journal*, pp. 11-12.

prisoners, particularly the sick and the wounded, had been bitterly complained of and the subject of Washington's grim protests. Howe responded to these, declaring that one-half of the sick prisoners had been received in the British hospitals and the remainder had been treated in their different places of confinement by their own surgeons. He added that these surgeons had been supplied without restriction with medicines until it was found that they were selling such medicines for their own profit.

The publication of this statement drew from Dr. James McHenry, who had been a prisoner at The Provost and was then, June 22, 1777, a prisoner at Philadelphia, a remarkable letter, only recently made public, in which all these matters seem to be treated with finality; it also throws upon the actual state of civilization in the eighteenth century a light that should be priceless to philosophers— and us.

McHenry, a physician of repute and character, denies flatly Howe's assertion that American prisoners were at any time while he was there received into the British Hospital or treated in the same manner as the sick and wounded among the British. He says they were often separated from other prisoners but thrust into places where they had no care and were left to die. The American field officers repeatedly by letter protested to Howe against these conditions, but no answer was returned to them and no change made in the system of treatment. The nominal direction of the sick and wounded prisoners was in the hands of one that called himself "Dr. Louis Debute," a man of a most infamous and aban-

doned character. McHenry himself went to Dr. Mallet, the British surgeon-general, and, as one doctor to another, reported the actual situation. He pointed out that wounded men lay without covering or protection, suffering intensely from the cold with the result that their wounds and limbs were mortifying. If Dr. Mallet had any doubts of this he had only to visit the Quaker Meeting House near at hand, which was full of such cases as he had mentioned—and worse.

Dr. Mallet said the account was "affecting" and he would look into it, but as Dr. Debute was an American he thought he was the proper man to complain to. McHenry then pointed out that Debute had never been in the American service but was a notorious criminal and rogue that had even been pilloried for his offenses. Mallet suggested that McHenry should supply the medicines that were required. McHenry countered by asking how on earth, he, a prisoner, could get medicines in New York. He said, however, that he was not only willing but desirous to give all the professional assistance he could but only on condition that the wretch Debute should be kept away. Mallet wanted to retain Debute as an assistant. McHenry said he was not fit to enter any sick-room. Mallet promised to dismiss him but continued him at his post until an act of glaring cruelty compelled or seemed to compel some action. McHenry says:

> An officer, prisoner on Long Island, came to our lodgings to inform Cols. McGaw and Miles that the Doctor who had charge of our sick had that morning in his presence given one of them

a blow with his stick, in consequence of which the man died fifteen minutes later.[1]

McHenry went at once to Dr. Mallet, who "expressed much concern." McHenry wanted Debute tried for murder and offered the officer as a witness. So they buried the victim at once to get rid of his mute evidence, shifted the living witnesses to different camps to prevent their testimony, and although what amounted to a confession had been obtained from Debute the matter was dropped. The most McHenry could obtain was an order that the murderer should be dismissed from his employment.

"This," says McHenry, "comprehends a period of six weeks' time. Their crowded situation, the effects of severe cold upon their limbs, the strong symptoms of a long deprivation of water expressed on many of their countenances, exclamations for drink and food from such as had strength left to speak, the groans of the dying, the looks of the dead that lay mixed with the living, and the insufferable impurity of the house made up together a scene more affecting and horrid than the carnage of a field of battle wherein no quarter is given." [2]

He declares positively that not only was medicine denied to the sick and the wounded but he and another American surgeon prisoner were repeatedly refused permission to visit the tormented patients and when despite this he made his way past the guard it was because he was supposed to be a Briton.

[1] *The Life and Correspondence of James McHenry, Secretary of War under Washington and Adams,* by Bernard C. Steiner, Cleveland, Ohio, The Burrows Brothers Company, 1907, pp. 10-12. Copyrighted. [2] *Ibid.*

This was the place and these the conditions into which Haym Salomon was now thrust. Any man that took up the Revolutionary cause and fell into the hands of the British commandant was exposed to death in these forms if he escaped the firing squad or Cunningham's hangman.[1] On the whole the firing squad would seem to be preferable.

Cornelius, the Yankee, had but a short time eluded his guard, and McHenry, the Yankee, had been transferred to Philadelphia when Salomon, the Polish Jew, came to take their places.

Of the details of his days there we have no scrap of testimony, and probably shall never have. It has been deemed likely that because of his position and importance, he must have been confined in the room reserved for officers. This was on the second floor, northeast corner, called in derision, "Congress Hall." The floor was bare oak boards; the prisoners slept upon it. If they had any covering it was of their own providing. The building was unheated in winter and badly ventilated in summer. Scores of young men that had been carefully reared in conditions of comfort, educated young men like Cornelius, lived in this place in the last extremities of destitution, any filth being viewed as good enough for a damned rebel. Henry Onderdonk, a stalwart Revolutionist of Dutch descent, was one of the sufferers there. He wrote afterward a moving account of the conditions he endured. He said that the single room known as "Congress Hall" was so

[1] Lecky in his huge anti-American tract says that there was no heroism displayed in the struggle for American independence. It is to be supposed that he never read the records of the American prisoners in British hands.

packed and overcrowded that when the men lay down to sleep on the floor they must lie packed in like sardines, clear across the room, from wall to wall, tightly. When the hard bed on which they rested caused their bones to ache beyond endurance so that they must have a shift, one man would cry out the command, "Right to left—turn!" and the whole compact mass would turn together.[1] The men lay in their clothes, which they had no opportunity to change. The higgledy-piggledy of their quarters had in winter but one advantage. They were warmer so.

Salomon, as the hated agent of the villainous Washington in the nefarious plot to burn the king's ships, must have been wedged in with the rest, to turn with the rest at the word of command. A spy, it was well understood in the kingdom of Cunningham, would not for long be subjected to these tortures. One fate for spies, and that with speed and no mercy.

If he had come a few weeks earlier to that chamber of horrors he would have been co-mate with another patriot, more widely celebrated than Dr. Cornelius but not so good a reporter. Only in the previous May, Ethan Allen, the irrepressible, after long enduring the miseries of "Congress Hall" had by good hap been snatched therefrom in time to save his life for the American hope.

The story of him and how he came into this dreadful place is worth a separate entry. When he was captured at Montreal he was bound hand and foot

[1] Onderdonk. He furnished a vivid description of all this for "Valentine's Annual," 1849.

with irons that were shackled to an iron bar eight feet long. Thus manacled he was thrust into the hold of a vessel and kept there five weeks. He was carried to England to be hanged, confined in Pendennis Castle, brought back to Halifax to be hanged and finally to New York, where he was at first allowed many privileges while British officers tempted him with bribes and the offer of a high commission to join the British army. When these failed he was thrown into The Provost, where Cunningham made him a favorite object of vengeance. No other prisoner was more often paraded before the drunken keeper's feasts. This lasted until May, 1778, when he was exchanged for a British colonel.

As to Nathan Hale, what happened to him between his capture, September 21, 1776, and his hanging at 11 o'clock the next morning is not known, but some authorities hold that he must have been locked up in The Provost because most of the patriots that were to be hanged were taken thence. This theory has confirmation in Cunningham's confession, if so arrant a knave told the truth even in the presence of death. He was himself hanged in London, August 10, 1791, though not for his crimes in New York, one regrets to note.[1] He had been convicted of forgery, which was then a capital offense in Great Britain. His confession made before his hanging is not perfectly authenticated, but bears internal evidence of truth. He says that his office of provost marshal put the American prisoners wholly at his mercy. Then he goes on:

[1] Conf. Harper's *Encyclopedia of United States History.*

I shudder to think of the murders I have been accessory to, both with and without orders from the Government, especially while we were in New York, during which time more than 2,000 prisoners starved in the churches by stopping their rations, which I sold. There were also 275 American prisoners and obnoxious persons executed, which were thus conducted:

A guard was dispatched from The Provost about half past twelve o'clock at night to the Barrack street, and the neighborhood of the barracks, to order the people to shut their window shutters and put out their lights, forbidding them at the same time to look out of their windows and doors on pain of death. After which the unfortunate prisoners were conducted, gagged, just behind the upper barracks and hung without ceremony, and then buried by the black pioneer of The Provost.[1]

From these documents we may draw additional light upon life in the prisons and the price Salomon paid for his Americanism. It must have been night when he was added to the contingent of wretchedness in "Congress Hall." Perhaps it was not altogether chance that saved him from sharing at once the fate the 275 other such prisoners had found at the hands of Cunningham—the midnight summons, the quick march to the spot back of the barracks and then the hangman or the firing squad. We know that he had made friends among the British officers and the memory of his work as a translator must still have been alive. Instead of being shot at once he was reserved for trial by a court martial. It was not much of a concession. The court martial did but one thing and did that with monotonous certainty.

[1] The main doubt cast upon the truth of the confession lies in the fact that Bancroft could not find in the records of Newgate prison the entry of Cunningham's hanging. This is negative testimony. Against it are the wide publicity given to the confession at the time, the absence of denials and the agreement of the confession with known facts and with the geography of the neighborhood.

The innate and controlling spirit of the man is the thing we are most interested in, and must be more and more as we pursue his singular career. Some of the light we need is in an incident of his stay at the horrible Provost. Among the prisoners was a Frenchman, one Samuel Demezes. For some reason undisclosed he seems to have been one of those most hated by Cunningham, who hated them all, and in consequence suffered such barbarities that his life was in danger. Salomon's sympathies were aroused in behalf of this unfortunate. He befriended him, comforted him and hoped to help him to escape.[1]

Exactly what happened to Salomon himself we can surmise from the authentic fragments of his story that have come down to us. It must have been within a few days, not more than four or five if precedent was followed, that he was put on trial, if such proceedings can be called by that name. Short was the shrift of war-time defendants that were to be made away with and particularly short under Clinton's stern rule. It is reasonable to believe that this victim was brought as so many others had been before the drumhead. If testimony was adduced against him it must have been of the flimsiest. There was probably not a scrap of document nor a word from a credible witness. Drumheads have nothing to do with testimony. Washington had planned to burn the shipping and the warehouses; some of these vile rebels had undertaken to do his infamous will.[2] This particular vile rebel had openly consorted with the depraved MacDougall and other Sons of Liberty.

[1] Memorial.

[2] Sparks MS.

Why delay then? The judgment of the court is that he shall be hanged tomorrow morning at sunrise.[1] Bring in the next.

He had left behind at his home his young wife and his first-born child less than a month old. We have no information as to her plight, but the custom was not to allow spies to communicate with anybody. What appears certain is that the Sons of Liberty knew all about his peril and in some way managed to get word of it to his old friend Alexander MacDougall.[2]

Where, all this time, was that stalwart warrior? At the news from Lexington and Concord he had made his way to Cambridge, joined the besieging army, fought at Long Island and elsewhere, and having proved his courage and capacity, he had risen to important commands. In August, 1778, he was in charge of certain American forces north of the city[3]—the man that had begun as a sailor, gone on as a printer, and won to be the writer of first-class editorials and debonair prisoner of the New Gaol.

He had at the start not a smattering of military science, but in this respect differed nothing from most of the other captains courageous on whom the fate of the colonial cause rested. It is extraordinary now to contemplate the fact, but the men that led the Revolution were for the most part rank civilians. We usually assume offhand that the French and

[1] Sparks MS.

[2] MacDougall commanded two brigades under Horatio Gates, who was in general command in New York State and along the Hudson. Irving, Vol. III, pp. 369-436.

[3] Sparks MS.

Indian War was a training school for the Revolutionary officers. It was so to only a limited extent. Nearly twenty years had passed since the close of that war and many of the men that had taken part in it were dead or incapacitated. Washington, indeed, was a conspicuous exception; his early war-time experiences had been invaluable to him. Putnam, Schuyler, Herkimer, Sumter, Mercer, were veterans. But Warren, who did so well at Bunker Hill but lost his life there, was a physician; Sullivan was a lawyer, so was Greene; Wayne was a farmer, Morgan had been a teamster, Ethan Allen a forgemaster, Henry Lee a country gentleman, Marion a farm worker. They had to learn how to fight as they went along. It is sure testimony both to their convictions about their cause and to their native capacity that they learned so well. None better than Alexander MacDougall, who was now a staff officer and performing one of the most important duties in the American service.

This was to watch Clinton like a hawk, to keep him cooped up in New York and to maintain the American front in a state of the utmost possible efficiency with the fewest possible men.

The American lines came down below Dobbs Ferry. The British patrol did not go much above Spuyten Duyvil. Between was a No Man's Land where the partizans of both armies raided and counter-raided, Cowboys and Skinners, and where a fugitive that ventured alone would probably fare worse than he could in the hands of open and regulated enemies. The Cowboys were nominally, or at times, on the

British side of the controversy; the Skinners on the American. As between them the choice was that said on eminent authority to pertain to rotten apples. The wayfarer that fell into the hands of either was lucky to come through with a shirt on his back and shoes on his feet—or maybe a head on his shoulders.

MacDougall's headquarters were in the neighborhood of Dobbs Ferry. He had his share in the efficient system of spies that Washington had organized and within a few hours he knew of the arrest of his old friend Salomon, and was no doubt determined to help him if help might be.

One way by which Washington and MacDougall kept in close touch with the situation in New York was through the supplies that the British must needs get from the countryside if they were to live. About all the most edible or nearly edible material that came from England was some questionable salt meat.[1] Otherwise they were supposed to live at the expense of the rebels' country. It appears that the supposition was far-fetched. The supplies came in so tardily that prices went up like a balloon. A pound of butter, 54 cents; a single egg, 12 cents; milk, 18 cents a quart; potatoes, $2 a bushel; turnips, $2 a half-bushel; onions, $2 a dozen. A luxury like a turkey cost $4.[2] All this was not in depreciated Revolutionary currency but the equivalent of coin that bore his gracious Majesty's intellectual features. Fuel was scarce; wood cost $50 a cord and a shilling was sometimes paid for a single stick. The shortage of fuel became so great that the magnificent trees

[1] Stone, p. 264. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 258.

in Wall Street, the pride of the city, were cut down and burned,[1] and eventually the British broke up a ship and used her timbers for fuel.

In these conditions, every effort was made to induce the farmers in the surrounding country to come in with produce and wood, for which they could obtain such prices as none of them had dreamed of. When these efforts failed or proved inadequate the commander took to sending out raiding parties to seize what was needed. These, too, were no great success. The farmers arranged things so that they were warned of the coming of the troopers and had time to bury their grain and to drive away their cattle. The troopers usually expressed their disappointment by burning the farmer's house and barns, but as this operated to prevent another raid the farmers had not altogether the worst of the bargain. They had saved their grain and their cattle.[2]

But the difficulties, always increasing, of obtaining anything to eat, made easy paths for any countryman, or for one that looked like a countryman. About the only passport he needed to the British lines was a load of vegetables, some dust on his clothing and an air of rustic wonder, with the result that there was a regular traffic in information out of Clinton's lines and despite all vigilance.

In another respect the spy business was facile. From the beginning of the war the British were extremely open to the machinations of any man that declared himself a sympathizer. This was not naïveté or congenital dulness, as some might be prone to

[1] Stone, p. 263.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 258-9, footnote.

think. That any human being should revolt against British rule was to the average British mind a thing abnormal, portentous or incredible. It was the universal British belief that the trouble in the colonies was produced and fomented by a few criminals or lunatics and the bulk of the people, being sane, were still loyal. The extent to which this fond belief had hold upon the British imagination is a lesson in man's limitless gifts of self-deception. All British officers arriving in America came with it perfectly formulated and, as nearly always happens in such cases, looked ardently for facts to fit their theory. This made them susceptible to any one that would tell the necessary lies. Long after the conflict was over the peculiar psychology persisted and is still to be met with. One of its interesting results was to induce the British nation and its historians to believe the smoothly flowing rivulet of falsehoods from the lips of the notorious Galloway. This man had turned Tory in Pennsylvania whence he had sought safety in flight, finally making his way to England where he sought to even his score by slandering his countrymen. It is odd to reflect that his testimony, which came in his own time to be repudiated in the place where he had uttered it, is now occasionally referred to as fact, and without a doubt has greatly influenced latter-day writers that should know better.

It appears that MacDougall got word to Salomon,[1] but how he managed that feat we are to surmise. The easy way would have been through one of these

[1] Sparks MS.

intelligence mongers disguised as a farmer. Obviously, the message had something to do with a possible escape, and must have instructed Salomon that if he could manage it he was to make his way by night to the north end of Manhattan Island and get across to Spuyten Duyvil, where, after he should have passed No Man's Land and the Cowboys and Skinners, he would have a chance to reach the American lines.

In all probability, judging from the results, this word must have reached Salomon before the day of the drumhead.

On the night before they were to be put to death, prisoners in The Provost were usually moved from "Congress Hall," if that had been their resting place, and locked up in a dungeon in the basement. We are to suppose that when the guard came at dawn to waken Haym Salomon and lead him forth to be killed, it found the prisoner gone. In the middle of the night he had mysteriously disappeared and left no trace.

A man brought up in the Polish Revolution had slipped from the hands of his captors just as many a Pole had slipped from the hands of the Russians.

The event need not seem so strange to us as it probably seemed to the British officers. We know now that Salomon had put to use one good friend[1] that he took with him into The Provost and may surmise that he had another. The first was a string of golden guineas that he had managed by some

[1] He wrote this afterward to his brother-in-law, but the letter like so many other documents in this narrative has perished. It is mentioned in the Sparks MS.

adroit trick to conceal about him.[1] The other was a perfect knowledge of the British posts and British guard methods that he had gathered when he was serving as interpreter to the Hessians. With the gold we know he bought his way out of his prison—just in time to save his life. Of course, we do not know, and never can, who took the gold, but Cunningham being in that business, it is not improbable that it reached his capacious pockets. Otherwise than by some way of rank corruption the escapes from his clutches were rare; he was a rascal but he knew how to keep his prison escape-proof. It would be an odd commentary on the ways of fate if the man that had caused so much acute agony to so many Americans were also the man that kept alive for the American cause one that was to do it an inestimable service.

Sentries surrounded The Provost; across the road were barracks filled with soldiers. Salomon evaded them all. It is like a chapter from Baron Trenck. Either he had been provided with the password, which is not impossible in view of his connections, or he managed to make himself, one might say, invisible, for safely he worked his way northward, past all the guards.

The Boston Post Road skirted a certain pond and bore away slightly to the eastward. It was the main-traveled highway out of the city. We learn from the narrative of Dr. Cornelius that there was another way on the other side of the pond, little frequented and soon entering the woods and open country. Cornelius went this way when he had escaped

[1] Sparks MS.

and it must have been the path that Salomon took in the dark. He could hardly have made before daylight farther than the neighborhood of what is now Morningside Park, but in that wilderness concealment was easy. The crossing of Spuyten Duyvil Creek must have been a problem, unless MacDougall had a spy handy. It was made in some fashion, and the Debatable Ground, too, and in the course of time, perhaps on the second day, he was safe in the American lines and with his old friend, Alexander MacDougall, sailor, placard writer, printer, soldier and intransigeant.

He did not stay there long. With MacDougall's help, no doubt, he traversed New Jersey and so, through American post to post, reached Philadelphia.[1]

[1] Sparks MS.

In this Sparks manuscript is a certificate signed "Wm. H. Bell" and saying:

"On investigating such of the memoranda and papers regarding his [Salomon's] civil services in that era of our history that have accidentally been preserved and submitted, I find the following facts:

"By an affidavit made in New York January, 1778, before Alderman Mathews, certified on its back by William Claygen, military secretary to Maj.-Gen. Horatio Gates, dated at the encampment, White Plains, August 15, 1778, it appears that so early as the year 1775 Mr. S. was in controversy with the enemies of the projected Revolution."

From this it is to be believed that Salomon was at White Plains on August 15 and thus the fact that his escape was made to the north is established.

So far as I have been able to discover, the affidavit made in New York before Alderman Mathews remains in some ways an inscrutable mystery. One Mathews was mayor of New York about this time, but he is supposed to have been a Tory. The original of the affidavit has long since disappeared. According to the Sparks manuscript it fully verifies the statement that Salomon's second arrest was because of his alleged connection with the plan to burn the shipping.

CHAPTER VI

Skirting the Reefs

IF the new country can be said to have a National Capital it is this Philadelphia, this metropolis of almost thirty thousand inhabitants and a great prestige. Reasonably, it is the place for one in Salomon's predicament to seek. The Continental Congress, which before the advancing British adjourned to York, Pennsylvania, has now returned and is again holding its wordy sessions in Independence Hall. Except for Washington's camp, the main business of the Revolution is managed at Philadelphia.

With the departure of the British force, lancers, dancers, prancers and all, the place has taken on an extraordinary activity. The enemy still hold New York; with their fleets, they blockade Boston; but the Delaware Capes seem less successfully estopped. Philadelphia has become the first American port. Almost at once, a huge trade has sprung up. The swift American vessels glide in and out, defy the blockade cordon, and keep open a channel of communication with Europe. More than ever that channel is important now. France is coming into the fight.

Salomon arrives virtually penniless in this bustling young city. He has left behind him in New York his wife, his ruined business, his child and all his

capital. His first thought is to find employment, and, under somebody's advice, no doubt, he lays his case, or part of it, before the Congress. The letter is dated August 25; scarcely two weeks have passed since he was a prisoner in The Provost condemned to death, and probably not a week since he left his friend MacDougall. The need must be sharp. This is his letter:

To the Honorable, The Continental Congress:

The Memorial of Haym Solomon,[1] late of the city of New York, merchant, Humbly shewith,

That your Memorialist was sometime before the Entry of the British Troops at the said City of New York and soon after taken up as a Spy and by General Robertson committed to the Provost—That by the Interposition of Lieut. General Heister (who wanted him on account of his knowledge of French, Polish, Russian &c Languages) he was given over to the Hessian Commander, who appointed him in the Commissary Way as purveyor chiefly for the Officers.—That being at New York he has been of great Service to the French and American prisoners and has assisted them with Money and helped them off to make their Escape—That this and his close connexion with such of the Hessian Officers as were inclined to resign and with Monsieur Samuel Demezes has rendered him at last so obnoxious to the British Head Quarters that he was already pursued by the Guards and on Tuesday the 11th inst. he made his happy Escape from thence—That Monsieur Demezes is now most barberously treated at the Provost and is seemingly in danger of his life. And the Memorialist begs leave to cause him to be remembered to Congress for Exchange.

Your Memorialist has upon this Event most irrevocably lost all his Effects and Credit to the amount of five or six thousand Pounds sterling and left his distressed Wife and Child of a Month all at New York waiting that they may have an opportunity to come out from thence with empty hands.

[1] So in the original.

In these Circumstances he most humbly prayeth to grant him any Employ in the way of his Business whereby he may be enabled to support himself and family—And your Memorialist as in duty bound &c &c.

HAYM SALOMON

Philadelphia August 25th, 1778.

It will be noticed at once that he says nothing about his recent adventures and the plan to burn the British shipping. He could not refer to the plan and his alleged part in it without betraying a confidence, and making public what was still a feasible movement against the enemy.

Congress, the poor, beset, bedeviled Congress, distracted with a desperate situation and groping in the dark, could not give much heed to any individual plaint. But Haym Salomon quickly showed that he could care for himself. There were at that time in Philadelphia about two hundred Americans of his faith, some of them rated among the most successful citizens. He had from all that remained a warm-hearted reception. One family alone in the Jewish contingent had flitted with the British garrison, lancers, dancers, and all. This was the household of David Franks, unrelated in any way to the family into which Haym Salomon had married, but bearing the same name.

David Franks was a Tory. It is remarkable that he and his immediate kin were the only Jewish Tories in Philadelphia; all the others were sturdy patriots. In the whole of America at that time, the David Frankses of Philadelphia and the Isaac Harts of Newport were the only conspicuous Jewish

families, so far as I can discover, that did not support the American cause. Hart had great shipping interests and strong British connections. Franks was naturally a conservative; with him business and social considerations pulled the same way.

He had a beautiful daughter named Rebecca, of whose surpassing charm the British officers, while they still occupied Philadelphia, had made much, even to the lifting up of the soul in song. When in the spring of 1778 Clinton, who had succeeded Lord Howe, found that he must evacuate the city, the young officers, led by Major André, arranged a farewell social pageant on an incredible scale of pomp and cost. It was called the Mischianza and included Knights of the Blended Rose and Knights of the Burning Mountain, who pranced about in silken garments of dazzling hues. Rebecca Franks was chosen for her beauty to be queen of these solemn fooleries.[1]

Except her father all the prominent Jewish merchants in Philadelphia had signed the Non-importation Act in 1765. Mathias Bush was one of them. He had a son named Solomon, who was a friend of Isaac Franks of New York. They entered the army at the beginning of the conflict and went to distinction together. It was natural, therefore, that the Bush family should be drawn from the first to the brother-in-law of Isaac Franks.

The Jews in Philadelphia were not yet strong enough to build a synagogue but worshiped in a hall. Salomon was most meticulous in the performing of

[1] Irving, Vol. III, p. 373.

his religious duties. The first thing he did when he reached Philadelphia was to join himself to this little knot of worshipers. Before long he was one of the leaders of their congregation. Some men bear in their faces the warrant of their character and energy. Assemblies choose them instinctively, if captains are wanted. It was so always with Haym Salomon; he left the tradition that men seemed to feel without reasoning upon it and wholly on his appearance that he was worth their confidence, and he drifted without effort into positions of influence.

But on the mart he must at first put forth all his skill; it was different there. He landed in Philadelphia with his two hands, his energy, his intimate knowledge of commerce and finance, and no other equipment to speak of. No doubt, for his immediate wants and to launch him on a new business career his fellow religionists gave him the help he needed. In a few days he was able to rent an office in Front Street between Market and Arch and to announce that he was prepared to deal in bills of exchange and other securities.

France and Holland were now giving to the American cause something of the money support it had needed from the first, and while, for a reason to be explained later, little of this support had so far reached America, the exports abroad and the French military activities began to produce here a supply of bills of exchange on foreign ports and cities. The sums they represented, to be made available for common use, must be turned into common funds. One of the difficulties that beset this transfer was that

there was no national currency. In Philadelphia when a bill of exchange was sold it was sold usually either for the paper currency issued by the State of Pennsylvania, for money of the old colonial days still left in circulation or, more rarely and by good fortune, for specie or Spanish dollars.

But bills of exchange, into whatsoever form they were to be transmuted, floated in large quantities around that market, and it was here that Salomon had the great advantage. Of all the men in Philadelphia it is likely that not another had his command of foreign languages and his intimate knowledge of European trade methods and conditions. The whole business was at his fingers' ends. From the beginning he prospered and in no ordinary way. In a short time he became known as one of the most successful brokers in the city, and, what meant as much for this story, when men talked about his success they talked about his honesty. It was a line of remark not too common upon men of his calling, as we shall presently see. But as to Salomon, he made money easily, he made it by open-day, straight-out methods, and, strangest of all, when he had made it he did not keep it.

In some way he had managed to rescue his wife and child from New York. They were all together now, in the plain little house in Front Street "between Market and Arch."

To the business of financial broker he added that of a broker in ships, and ships were playing a greater part than ever in the economics of the struggling commonwealth. Besides the packet and

the trader, another kind of deep-sea adventurer came to anchor in the Delaware and must be provided for and agented. Privateering had sprung up and went at a bound to an astonishing development. The daring exploits of the American privateersmen more than evened the captures by the British blockaders and were beginning to cause an agonized outcry from the British merchants. As the privateers came into Philadelphia with their captured cargoes what they needed first was some one of skill and judgment to determine the value of the spoils and the best use to make of them. At such work Salomon, expert in all markets, was unequaled.

The commerce of Philadelphia continued to expand. The Marquis de Chastellux, who was one of the sympathetic Frenchmen coming about this time, said that he saw more than three hundred ships at anchor off the water front, although the British had not left a single vessel afloat when they evacuated the city.[1] Flush days those were, and the rapidity with which fortunes were gathered greatly astonished the Frenchman. If only three vessels in ten got safely through the blockade the profits of the three outweighed the loss on the others. Prices abroad of the commodities the Americans had to sell went sky-soaring to strange heights. Flour that cost $5 a barrel in Philadelphia sold for $28 to $30 a barrel in Havana. Wise men that could keep their heads and knew the principles of commerce prospered while they helped the country. They pierced the blockade, sold

[1] William Graham Sumner, *The Financier and the Finances of the American Revolution*, Vol. I, p. 274.

American products in foreign lands and brought back money that was sorely needed.

Salomon was one of them. As much as ever he was for the American cause but his health was broken. His terrific experiences in prison had undermined his constitution and fastened upon him a cough that threatened his life. Physically, there seemed to be nothing he could do worthy of a Son of Liberty and a friend of Alexander MacDougall, but before long fate opened a way to a service much greater than shouldering arms.

Despite their successes on the battle-field and the possible hope that lay in the alliance with France, the cause of the Americans was at a low ebb. The madhouse nature of their excursion was now to the wise clearer than crystal. They were not thirteen united colonies fighting as a nation; they were thirteen scattered settlements, fat-headedly jealous of one another, having neither the experience nor the machinery to make a common effort [1] in a common cause. The physics of the whole thing were merely absurd. The British held the only facile means of communication, which was by the sea. When they wished to attack South Carolina they had but to put their troops aboard. To oppose them the Continental forces must be marched a thousand miles at perhaps twenty miles a day—supposing they could be got to march at all. The idea of united effort had to be planted in a soil all new to such growth and then watered day and night to keep it from perishing.

[1] "Only little groups of farmers scattered along the edge of a wilderness," says Professor Sumner in his monumental work, before cited, Vol. I, p. 35.

Even so it was a plant of ragged and uncertain tilth. When the delegates to the Continental Congress got together they could not rid themselves of the old habit of squabbling, each for his own province—until disaster lunged at them hard enough to frighten them into some motion of wisdom.

The financial part of this conglomerate was the most wonderful of all. Nothing but the direct interposition of Providence can explain the miracle of a successful issue from such a bog of impossibilities. If today the physical terms of the Revolutionary proposal cause us to gasp, the financial were much worse. It must have been men that had neither knowledge nor guess of the settled ways of established government in the world of their time that contemplated so wild a leap in the face of experience. Nothing but a strongly centralized governing power with a readily working enginery for the gathering of revenue could have the least hope in such an unequal contest, and here was no such enginery nor the beginning of one. This is too commonly overlooked in estimating the Revolution; we do not think of it in its impressive aspect as the most desperate adventure in history and we can never see it truly in that light unless we study its finances.

The thirteen scattered and uncoordinated settlements of farmers went into the struggle without a national army, without a treasury, without any kind of financial organization.

There was at the beginning of the war and until after its virtual end nothing resembling a national taxation and no national revenue.

This is the amazing fact. One would think the first question to present itself when such a war was contemplated would be where should the inevitable funds be looked for, and, as nearly as we can find out now, scarcely anybody gave to that vital point so much as a casual thought.

One explanation lies in the peculiar system of government that had grown up in the colonies. They had never accustomed themselves to a regularly recognized and reasonably based taxation. Except for the French and Indian War, the expenses of the colonial establishments were small. On the basis of inquiries conducted by Adam Smith, the total income of the thirteen colonies just before the Revolution was about $300,000.[1] The whole government of the colony of New York, for instance, was conducted on about $40,000 a year. Of course, $40,000 then is equal to about $200,000, now, but even so the fact gives us the convincing light upon the feebleness and the simplicity of the colonial organization. The French and Indian War worked to lessen the morale of even this flabby conception. Its heavy cost was met by incurring debt and at the outbreak of the Revolution those that thought at all of the subject naïvely assumed that this was the simple and satisfactory way to conduct any war.

Such are the facts. We can suppose only that the resentment among the American leaders was so deep and their feelings so hot that all their thought was centered upon fighting until they clean forgot there must be money to sustain the fighting. For they were

[1] Sumner, Vol. I, p. 25

not lunatics nor harebrained fanatics nor mad adventurers; most of them were grave and reasoning persons. Men like Jefferson, John Adams, Robert Morris, James Wilson, Edward Rutledge, to say nothing of Franklin, the greatest mind of his age, were not the men to leap into the fire that they might see how near they could come to being burned alive. Yet among them all we hear of but one that from the beginning raised persistently the question of where on earth the funds were coming from to support all this effort. Professor Sumner tells us that Samuel Dexter, who was a delegate to the Massachusetts Provincial Congress, asked that question and when he found he could get no answer to it, left the ship in disgust and went ashore.[1]

The others sailed serenely on, with a faith in Providence or in luck beautiful to see and having as the only financial substance in their airy project this fantastical device:

Each colony, being a free and independent sovereign commonwealth and as good as any going, furnished, set forth and paid its own soldiers just as it controlled their movements.

This was in the beginning. Later, it paid the soldiers sometimes and more often it did not.

Whereupon, being unfed as well as unpaid, they went home.

The efforts of the slow, lumbering Continental Congress to deal with this menacing situation light up the puling infancy stage of representative government. Literally years passed before this Congress

[1] Sumner, Vol. I, pp. 5-6.

hit out anything of a scheme for an efficient armament and by that time the only national money it had was some scraps of paper worth perhaps five cents a pound.

It was in a vague and timid effort to meet the necessity of a general fund to further the general cause that this paper money had been issued. The basis was the notion or belief or hope or dream that it was to be lent to the States to enable them to pay their troops and then the States were to tax themselves, redeem the paper money and destroy it as fast as redeemed. At first none of the States, being each a free and independent commonwealth, as good as the best and accepting dictation from no one, would do this, and it was for this reason and not because of waning faith in the cause that the Continental currency so quickly declined in value.

There was nothing to support it but an expected action by the States and that action the States did not take.

The British, seeing their chance, printed counterfeits by the bushel. This helped the grand descent. Twenty years later when they did the same thing to French *assignats* it was accounted a new device. They learned it (with other things) in the American Revolution.

Not all the States were equally negligent of this new, strange unlovely duty called taxation. Connecticut and Rhode Island, for instance, responded promptly and intelligently with repeated levies. But these could not affect the general situation, in which there being nothing better than the hot air of hope

to back up the Continental issues,[1] down they went like Satan falling from heaven.

Since there was no revenue, the unlucky Congress, which had only a shadow of real authority, and hardly that, betook itself to borrowing, about which it knew as little. It began June 3, 1775, by borrowing £6,000 to buy gunpowder, issuing a genial promise that the amount would be repaid but giving no other detail about it. This process not proving joyously fertile in returns, and no one understanding bond issues, the next step was to put forth what were called Loan Office Certificates, which entitled the bearer to be paid a certain amount on a certain date with interest at five per cent. These not being much better supported than the paper money pursued it down the slide.[2]

For the Congress of those years was never a legislative body. With difficulty if at all the modern mind grasps this basic fact. Congress had no authority to legislate. Its function was to advise the States what laws they should pass; it could pass no law for them.

The first recognition of the need of a definite and workable financial valve-gear came in February, 1776, when this body appointed a standing Committee of the Treasury, composed of five members. Its

[1] "The finances of the American Revolution were peculiar from the fact, among others, that they scarcely had a definable limit. The regular normal operations of taxation and public loans did not exist. There was no proper fiscal system for the collection of revenue and disbursement of expenditures. There was only a simulacrum of a treasury. On the other hand, the financial officers and the financial operations were forced to include in their scope, currency, banking, transportation and commerce." Sumner, Vol. I, p. 5.

[2] "Congress had no understanding of the meaning of credit." *Ibid.*, p. 74.

ministrations, if any, were futile. What could a committee of the inexperienced do, standing about like landsmen on a tilting quarter-deck? For more than two years the Revolution thus ground its way along, bumping from shoal to shoal. At Valley Forge it came near to a totality of smash. The soldiers were unpaid, partly naked and living upon charity or chance. The inexpressible wonder is that they did not rise and strangle somebody.

The following summer, when Salomon reached Philadelphia, the financial chaos had once more come to a condition in which it seemed that the whole gallant effort was about to be ruined for lack of working capital. The troops of more than one state had openly mutinied, and troops of others refused to move outside of their own boundaries.

Within a month, being in fact, early September, 1778, the Treasury Committee made a report revealing so desperate a status that the document was ordered to be kept a secret. In April, 1779, the Treasury Committee reported again, flatly declaring that public business could no longer be conducted on the basis of haphazard. Tardily, the money department was reorganized. A treasury board was created, being two men that were and three that were not members of Congress, and into their hands was put the task of meeting the emergency.

All this time there was no national taxation. The war had been on two years before so wise a man as John Adams saw the necessity of such a thing. Other recognition of it grew, but slowly. So far as Congress was concerned, conviction came at last

that its footless paper money could not meet the needs of the situation and that the States could not be persuaded nor coerced to support such money with their own taxes. The only recourse left was to borrow from abroad and it was loans from France and Holland, or the lively expectations of such things, that now occupied the dreams of statesmanship, while the soldiers starved or mutinied.

How any one that reads with attentive and reasoning mind the records of these cruces can overlook or decry the clear genius of George Washington is incomprehensible. It was he that held the whole tottering fabric together, that ended the mutinies by persuading the mutineers to return and endure, that diligently spurred the bickering, squalling Congress to try to keep some step, that understood the difficulties and usually the way out of them. With other rare traits he had a keen eye for men and seldom made an error in their choosing. Amid the agonies of Valley Forge he had discovered Robert Morris, and made him a kind of financial counselor. In that capacity he had always a larger scope of duties to perform until now in these days he appeared upon the scene, *deus ex machina,* to ride the financial whirlwind and direct the storm.

Such, at least, was for long the opinion of historians and commentators. Not all the later observers have been so sure of it nor of the man. Even in his own time, opinion was divided as to his fidelity if not as to his gifts. As it was through him that Haym Salomon came to perform his great service, we should have as near a view as possible of Robert Morris.

He was born in Liverpool, England, and came to America alone when he was only a boy. His father, who had been at first a mechanic and then a merchant, followed him hither to die when Robert was fifteen, leaving him what was for those days a fortune, being all of $7,000. He was then a clerk in the Philadelphia commercial house of Willing. When he was twenty-one he had increased his capital to a point where he could buy an interest in the business, and the firm became Willing and Morris. A few years more, and he had risen to be its directing force. Then he made it the leading house in Philadelphia and virtually the leading house in America.

He was rated a rich man. No one will ever know whether this was true, because he had incurred the undying hatred of Arthur and William Lee, who so filled the records with bitter attacks upon him that there is no way now to come at the plain truth. All we know is that Arthur Lee was a dyspeptic, a fault-finder and a trouble-maker, and so wonder whether what he says about Morris has most to do with fact or bile. According to the Lees, Willing and Morris were on the verge of bankruptcy when the Revolution broke and brought them happy salvation in the shape of contracts and large, sudden profits.

With others than the Lees he was unpopular but on more discernible grounds. He had taken up the cause of the colonists at the beginning and was a member for Pennsylvania of the Continental Congress, but, probably because of the old birthplace urge in the blood, so common and still so mysterious, he had opposed separation. For this reason, he was

by many looked upon as almost a Tory. On July 2, 1776, he had voted against the resolution of Independence; on July 4, he declined to vote for the Declaration, but after it had been adopted, he tardily signed it.

For all this he was savagely censured. Yet the man had qualities that nearly allied him to greatness. He had a lofty and inflexible courage, for one thing, and he was the first man in American public life to see in all its dimensions the great problem of national finance and to devise a plan to solve it. To this must be added a devilish persistence, a singular versatility and alertness in his mental equipment and a command of plain, forcible speech.

In the way of debit, as will presently appear, we have to admit certain prejudices, his temper was not always under perfect control,[1] and in later days his judgment seemed strangely defective. At all times he was the business man, keen and shrewd, and playing the game without for a moment overlooking himself.[2] He was a blunt man with simple, direct, unsocial manners. Yet having married one of the most charming women in Philadelphia society, his house was something of a social center.

The year 1779, in the opinion of Professor Sumner, was the lowest ebb in American affairs, but it is hard to be distinguished from the year 1780, or the year 1781, which opened with a treasury deficit of $1,600,000. One thing, at least, was sure then: the longer the financial chaos went unchecked the worse it was growing. This must have been apparent to any

[1] Sumner, *Robert Morris*, p. 91. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 91.

man in Congress with intelligence enough to read plain print, but it was not until the early part of 1781 that the national legislators arrived at the point where they were willing to surrender into one man's hands the control of the finances, such as they were, and to choose Robert Morris to be that man, which may be regarded as the first step toward financial sanity.

Thereafter he fought with a kind of dogged desperation to keep the ship from the rocks. It is common to think that as the military prowess of the Revolutionists was increasingly shown in a series of triumphs in the South, the promise of success grew more certain. It would have done so but for the everlasting prospect of financial collapse. Morris must steer always among reefs and without a sign of a chart. The whole story belongs to the fairy tales of business for which another century will discard mere fiction as stuff for babes. Every time it looked as if the ship could tack no more and nothing could save her, she managed to find a passage through the shoals and slipped along it. The French came in with a handful of timely money, or the Dutch; there was an excellent sale of bills of exchange, or something turned up at home. But the greatest of all these benefactions was when Robert Morris came upon Haym Salomon.

The manner of their meeting we shall not know. Salomon's letter was still on file in the archives of Congress, and Morris, through some member, may have heard of it. But there was another and stronger reason why one so astute and discerning as Robert

Morris should have known well about the most successful and most patriotic broker in Philadelphia, and the new superintendent had been in office but a few days when Haym Salomon began to be summoned there. After that the ways were eased for the dizzy evolutions of national finance.

It is the first point in this most unusual story, this romance of the counting room and the day-book. In his forty-first year, the Jew from Poland, who had been but nine years in America, was become the financial genius of its Revolution. Pulaski had given his life for that cause and Kosciusko his best endeavors in the field. Haym Salomon gave his skill, wisdom and an unflagging and curiously selfless devotion.

CHAPTER VII

The Rasp of a Girding Letter

THE year 1781, which saw the first of these transformations, opened with a dismal drama of neglect, incompetence and suffering.

In the Continental army, on the first day of the new year, the entire Pennsylvania line mutinied.

It had been in camp at Morristown; without its officers, it now started to march upon Philadelphia with the intention to compel Congress to relieve the soldiers' necessities. Anthony Wayne, the sanely Mad, the soldiers' darling, the hero of so many dashing exploits, tried all he knew to keep them back. They would not listen even to him. In New York, Sir Henry Clinton heard with rapture of the revolt and sent two emissaries to enlist the mutineers in the British army, promising fat meals, sure pay and easy life. The mutineers seized the emissaries and handed them to Wayne to be hanged as spies. But they kept on their way to Philadelphia and Congress.

On January 15, the whole New Jersey line followed this example.

The army was going to pieces. For months the soldiers had not been paid, they had hardly been fed, they went in rags. The agent of Virginia wrote to Washington that the troops of his State were so

nearly naked they could not leave their quarters. Officers or privates, it was all one story. In the beginning the pay of a colonel had been fixed at $90 a month, of a captain at $45 and of a private at $7. Continental money, in which these unfortunates were paid, had now reached a point where even at its nominal or official valuation the pay of a colonel was $3.30, of a captain $1.66 and of a private 20 cents—a month. The expedient had been tried of arresting and prosecuting persons that refused to take for money these sorry Continental rags, and this having failed to restore credit, statesmanship seemed without hope. Yet not everywhere. The governor of Rhode Island having blankets to send to the troops of that State and being unable to obtain their cost from the Continental authorities, coolly billed the lot to George Washington and expected him to foot the bill. The government had already borrowed from Washington everything he had. It had even contemplated confiscation, and maybe had experimented with it—upon Tories.

Civil employees were in a state no better than the army's; perhaps their condition was worse. Secretaries, clerks, bookkeepers, contractors, messengers —not one had seen for weeks a cent of pay. Some were in such dire distress that they slunk out of sight to avoid arrest and imprisonment for debt.[1] The Continental Treasurer and the Treasury Board were pursued by hungry hordes of creditors they could

[1] Robert Morris wrote to the President of Congress that "the Treasury was so much in arrears to the servants in the public offices that many of them could not without pay perform their duties, but must have gone to jail for debts they have contracted to enable them to live."

do nothing to appease. Never was it more plainly demonstrated that the money chest is the spinal-cord of warfare. In some of the camps soldiers relied upon hunting for their food. Many of their officers were in such a state that, being too proud to beg and too busy to hunt, they were actually starving.

The whole cause tottered on the brink of irretrievable ruin, and all for one reason. The financial machinery, from the beginning slight and foolish, had broken down. All the courage, the sacrifices, the gallantry of the fling in the face of a superior power, the heroism of endurance, the ingenuity of leaders and the wisdom of philosophers like Jefferson and Franklin, seemed about to be wasted for lack of a little currency and the means to provide more.

It was not alone Continental money that was below par. The States were issuing money of their own and the issues of a State like Pennsylvania, one of the best and soundest, were sometimes at four for one of specie.[1]

Yet the ultimate source of the trouble above all we should bear in mind. It was not, as some historians and commentators have given out, that Congress was made up of idiots, ruffians, grafters or dodos. There sat in Congress some of the best men in America and in character equal to the best in any country. The heart of the difficulty was the lack of authority, the lack of experience, lack of acquaintance with the theory and methods of national financiering, and the total lack of precedent in coordinated effort.

These, and the enormous physical difficulties of

[1] Morris's Diary, June 8, 1781.

distance and the thumb-handed means of communication.

The North knew nothing of what was going on in the South and was uncheered by successes that might have put a different face on the gloomy outlook. Two days after the New Jersey men had mutinied, Morgan struck Tarleton and Cornwallis the smashing blow of The Cowpens. There followed the great American epic, the retreat of Morgan before Cornwallis's army, and though it was the crux of the war, nobody in Philadelphia knew of it. All Philadelphia knew was that in New York Sir Henry Clinton was preparing an expedition. If it should move now, who could attempt to oppose it with the starving and half-clothed soldiers that still kept the field and the faith? Washington had established himself at Dobbs Ferry that he might the better watch Clinton. He might as well be in Nova Zembla if he was to have no army to fight under him.

The Pennsylvania and New Jersey mutineers marched on, headed for Congress. A wholesome fear shook that eminently deliberative body. In haste it sent out messengers with promises and good words and a show of alleged money. The mutineers retired to their camps, and many a congressman must have heaved a sigh of relief.

But the disease was not cured. A symptom had been for the time being suppressed; the fever was still at work underneath.

It is true that by this time France and Holland were making their projected subsidies to the Confederation, but little of the money thus appropri-

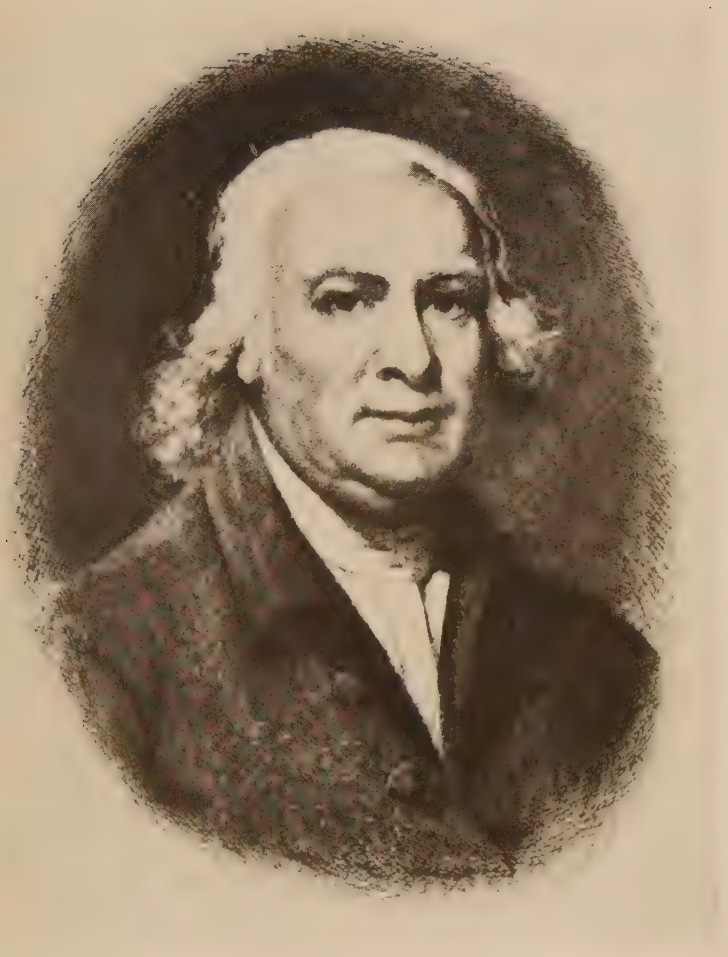
ated reached America. The bulk of it was spent abroad for supplies, for it must be remembered that besides their bare hands the colonists had little to fight with. For supplies, and for the embassies to France, Holland, Spain. To maintain these at their best was indispensable and until they should be provided for, Congress at home must shift for itself.

By May it was evident that the end was at hand. Unless something were done to supply or to simulate a national finance, the Revolution promised to collapse and the French would be left to fight virtually alone. It was then, May 10, 1781, that Congress came to its senses, created for the first time what was in effect this Secretaryship of the Treasury and gave the place to Morris.

The next day he opened his office in Philadelphia and began the Diary that, although still unpublished, is the incomparable source of information about the financial rescue work for the salvaging of the nation. Congress, always lingering behind, was not ready to administer the oath to him until June 27, but he was at work May 11.[1]

He had at that time a seat in the General Assembly or State legislature of Pennsylvania, a body over which he exercised a persuasive influence, and he had an intuition that he had better hold to that seat despite the prejudice against one man in two offices. There are some intuitions that are superior to reason; this was one of them. Pennsylvania, because of its better resources and larger wealth, was about all

[1] His salary was $6,000, the largest paid to any man in the public service. He drove a hard bargain before he would accept the place, but having taken it, gave it all he had.



ROBERT MORRIS
Superintendent of Finance

that was left of the semblance of a financial backbone. Morris felt that he would need all of that and more in his new position.

Two things were clear to him in his thinkings on the grim outlook. The country must have a central bank of issue and discount, and it must have a mint to provide for the supreme lack of a circulating medium. Nothing could better show the back-bush state of the general mind on subjects of government than that he seems to have been the only man in the country able to see these needs.

Six days after he has opened his office he writes to the President of the Continental Congress the plan he has long matured for a national bank. This, also, being new, Congress naturally looks upon with horror.

The next day it has something else to think of. A letter comes from George Washington, one of those straight, stern, businesslike letters he writes so searchingly, telling in plain terms that his army is starving and unless something is done to relieve it he will shortly find himself a general without troops.

On this, a member, seized with a brilliant inspiration, thinks he has found the way out of the wilderness, and offers a resolution that General Washington be empowered and authorized to seize flour wherever and whenever he can find it. Then a committee is appointed and dispatched to the Superintendent of Finance to report this noble device.

Morris thinks but little of it. An authorization to seize flour will not be much of a meal for men that have not been decently fed in months. No other sug-

gestion occurring to the congressional mind, Morris has one of his own.

He will use his own means and his own credit, buy flour and send it to the starving troops.

Two days later he is able to write to Washington that two thousand barrels of flour are on their way to his army.

Note the incident, for it is the first showing of a master mind in the supply department. Hope begins to dawn glimmeringly for the ill-used soldier and the bailiff-hunted clerk.

The man that brought it in was beset with a thousand difficulties and perils. He used up all his own credit; always he was at the end of his resources, often he was at the end of his wits.

Help from abroad came in fragments and slowly. When it arrived it was in the form of bills on Paris, chiefly on the great French banking house of La Couteulx and Company.[1] These reached Morris (sometimes) from various sources, and he must needs turn them into current money before they could be of use to him. In other words, he must sell these bills for what he could get for them, gather up depreciated State currency, and try to keep going.

Whenever he dared, he drew on Paris and trusted to Providence and the generosity of the French that the drafts might be honored.

There were now about six thousand French troops in America and more arriving. They had their own paymasters, who were supplied with bills of exchange like those Morris was trying to sell.

[1] Diary, September 3, 1781.

The French bill, of course, must be paid out for subsistence, quarters and the like for the French soldiers.

This put into circulation a considerable amount of such paper and caused for Morris an infinite worry. Holders of the bills from French sources, having obtained them for commodities sold to the visitors at high prices, were always willing to dispose of them for cash in hand at much less than current rates. The result was that Morris frequently found himself in an impossible market. To obtain the funds the government needed he must sell bills, but he knew it was unwise and unsafe for him to sell one of them for less than the best market rate, representing a tolerable basis of exchange between the two kinds of money. If the government were to enter into competition with the underselling brokers, the only possible result would be to drag the price of bills down to ruinous levels and fatally weaken the whole line of monetary defense.

In this dilemma his position was virtually at the mercy of brokers and yet set against them. The government and the government's officers could never go huckstering the government's bills up and down the Coffee House. Brokers were indispensable, but they were reputed, probably not without reason, to be cormorants; all except one.

France had already sent her minister to the new Republic. He was the Chevalier de la Luzerne, a name that Americans have reason to remember with gratitude. As the French forces began to arrive it was necessary to have an American financier of ca-

pacity and integrity, fluent in French and English, who could handle the bills of exchange soon to be paid out. Luzerne looked over the possible candidates in Philadelphia and lost no time in choosing Salomon—for his gifts in tongues, no doubt, and then for something else.

He had shown a curiously keen interest in promoting in every way in his power the Franco-American alliance.

To help this along he had already been of good service. In his youthful wanderings he had been much in Holland, where he formed potent connections, business and personal. Likewise in France he was known and remembered. When the French government and the Dutch people showed a willingness to help the American Revolutionists, Salomon was able by reason of his acquaintances in the two friendly countries to further the negotiations in ways that counted. We are beyond either tradition or fancy about this; a committee of Congress determined it.[1] After a laborious investigation of the matter, it made this report:

> Released from prison, Mr. Salomon is next heard of as the negotiator of all the war subsidies of France and Holland, which he sold in bills to the merchants of America, at a credit of two and three months, on his own personal security, without the loss of a cent to the country, and receiving only a quarter per centum; while, as appears from an account now in the archives of the Department of States, relating to the twenty million livres subsidy, that a sum of $60,000 was deducted as the charge for the negotiations.

[1] Thirtieth Congress, First Session, House of Representatives, Report No. 504.

What the committee had in mind here was that whereas Salomon gave his services virtually for nothing, other brokers that handled these matters charged heavily for their work.

This strange person, then, who married sentiment to business, was next appointed paymaster-general of the French forces in America and was actually performing the duties of that office without charging for them; performing them as a patriotic duty.[1] Great sums of money passed over his threshold; he took no commission for banking them.

In this way the unpretending brokerage office in Front Street "near the Coffee House" had become the financial headquarters of the whole French activity. More than ever, therefore, in the way of daily business and because of his wide experience abroad, Salomon was the man that had sounded the heart of the mystery about bills of exchange and how to sell them.

He had been active also in his private business capacity, making money and gaining reputation. Advertisements of his, like this, in the "Pennsylvania Journal," February 28, 1781, had become familiar to the mercantile world.

A FEW BILLS OF EXCHANGE ON FRANCE,
ST. EUSTATIA AND AMSTERDAM
TO BE SOLD BY
HAYM SOLOMON, BROKER.

The said Solomon will attend every day at the COFFEE HOUSE between the hours of twelve and two, when he may be met with, and any kind of business in the brokerage will be undertaken

[1] Sparks MS.; Thirtieth Congress, First Session, House Report No. 504.

by him, and those Gentlemen who chuse to favour him with their business may depend upon the greatest care and punctuality.

So every day he sits there in his corner of the Coffee House, suave, courteous, observant, reticent and sought after, the presiding genius of his own machine. The Coffee House is the Bourse of Philadelphia; he is its governing committee. On the floor the things most dealt in are bills of exchange. He sways the buying and the selling. All the dealers know him; some of them fear him, we have reason to surmise, and some extremely dislike him. Without concealment, he brings down the rate of usance here in this our Venice; most assuredly he does. He lends out money gratis; most certainly he does. Yet there can be no dealing in bills without thinking of him and what he can do and what he will do, there in the corner of the Coffee House every day, twelve to two o'clock, quiet, suave, courteous, observant, and unturnable from one fixed purpose that will be better seen as we go on with him.

The other brokers that like him not, they know him well, but he must be still better known to certain men back of the governmental scenes, and for better reasons. While the United States, before the choosing of Robert Morris, has been without a Secretary of the Treasury, the committee of Congress and the Treasury Board have struggled with the same problems that he is now trying to solve, and Salomon has already been of much use to these officers. He has advanced to them money in large sums on the extremely doubtful security they were able to

offer. He has taken their certificates and the notes of the State treasurers and even Continental dollars, despised and rejected of men. There is reason to think that he has already come to the aid of the government with the promissory notes that long afterward figured as one of the odd features of his benefactions.

Plainly, here is the man for Morris's purposes, and the Diary of June 8 records their first association:

> I agreed with Mr. Haym Salomon[1] the Broker, who has been employed by the Officers of his Most Chris'n Majesty [meaning him of France] to make Sale of their Army and Navy Bills to assist me.

But despite his reputation and prestige, Morris turned to him at first with manifest reluctance and of necessity. He had tried other brokers and found them impossible. His conferences with them resulted only in "violent altercations," says he. What they quarreled about he does not tell in that Diary of his, but the thing is plain enough. They were in business not for their health, these brokers, or for the benefit of the uplift, but for profits, large, plain profits, and they wanted a commission for all they did at rates that Morris must have thought mere extortion. Again we know this to be the fact about other transactions of the kind, for a committee of Congress ascertained it.[2] One broker in Philadelphia was known

[1] "Solomon" the name is spelled in the Diary, but this error was common and as it is here clearly the slip of the clerk that handled the Diary, I have corrected it in the citations that follow.

[2] Thirtieth Congress, First Session, House of Representatives, Report No. 504.

to be serving the government and not himself, and that was Salomon.

The first references in the Diary betray the superintendent's state of mind. "Mr. Haym Salomon, the Jew broker," he says. Evidently he had rather deal with brokers that were not Jews if he could. Salomon was to undertake the selling of the bills of exchange and at the same time keep up prices in the face of the fierce competition of other vendors. He was to watch the market and its conditions, thrust in at the happy chance, sell at the top price, and so again frustrate the thing that dogged at the superintendent's heels—bankruptcy, no less; "because he knows a frightful fiend doth close behind him tread" was the idea that dominated all else.

Here was a task to call for the best there might be in the best banker that ever calculated interest and there would be times when it would daunt and fluster even him.

Morris wished to know what brokerage Salomon would charge for this service.[1] Salomon put him off, but being pressed, observed that brokerage was a matter that could be settled thereafter; in any event, the charge would not be above the half of one per cent. One and a half to two per cent were prevailing rates; sometimes more. According to a committee of Congress Salomon took only one-fourth of one per cent—if anything.[2]

[1] Morris Diary, June 8, 1781.

[2] Thirtieth Congress, First Session, House of Representatives, etc., as before. But the fact is certified to by other reports.

A letter from Salomon to John Bronlow, dated April 2, 1782, shows that brokerage rates most commonly in use ranged from 2½ to 5 per cent.

In this way and this way only the ship was kept afloat from day to day. Even with all this help she seemed half the time in the gravest doubt. Everything was in a state of chaos—except the mind of the commander-in-chief, which is revealed in these annals as more than ever respectable. A few sample entries from Morris's Diary illuminate better than any modern description the nature of the crisis. Illimitable cares descended upon the head of the Superintendent of Finance. He was not only expected to find money for the army and navy, the civil establishment and all else, but there came upon him many issues that were of purely local concern and should have been dealt with by the municipality, if there had been one worth the name.

July 5. Doctor Thos. Bond junr informed me that the managers of the Pennsylvania Hospital refused to Receive putrid Patients from the New Gaol, therefore, he proposes to get them that are not putrid thither and the rest to the bettering house. I agreed to enable him to procure house Sheets & Bed cases &c.

July 6. The Board inform me however that there is such general disorder and disobedience in every Department of Public Service that proper returnes cannot be got from any body. A conversation ensued on the general miserable Situation of our Affairs.

It was in these days that Washington conceived the plan that finished the ruin of Cornwallis, and Robert Morris happened to be at the commander's right hand when the decision came. The chief American army lay on the Hudson. It was growing larger with the arrival of French troops and new recruits. Washington meditated an attack on New York.

But the commander-in-chief was like everybody else connected with the poor paralytic government; he was hampered, oppressed and helpless for the want of money. It was his purpose to attempt a decisive move if he could, but not with a discontented, unpaid and half-fed army. Morris was urged to visit the camp at Dobbs Ferry that he might see for himself the exact situation and possibly, by the grace of Providence, some way to escape from it. The affairs of his office were so critical that he was loath to be gone from it even for a few days. But he had chosen a most capable assistant and understudy, another Morris, not related to him, young Mr. Gouverneur, destined to a more generous fame as a constitution writer. So on August 7, the superintendent set forth. He traveled by roundabout and unfrequented roads, for British scouting parties and Tories were occasionally raiding the highways in Jersey, and thus reached Dobbs Ferry.

He was at headquarters there the night the decision was reached that was to mean so much. Count de Grasse, the French admiral, had sent from the West Indies word that he must be delayed there for a time, and the attack on New York must be postponed, for nothing could be done there without a fleet. Washington conceived the idea of a quick movement and an attack upon Cornwallis. In the group at headquarters was Richard Peters, secretary of the Board of War. Turning to him Washington said:

"What can you do for me?"

"With money, everything," said Peters. "Without money, nothing."

He looked hard at Morris.

"Let me know how much you want," said the Superintendent of Finance, with a front that, considering his actual situation, is not to be deemed less than superb.

Washington made up his estimate of what would be required to move the troops to Virginia. Morris went out, borrowed $20,000, and Washington began to carry out his plans. It appears that Morris had promised to repay in October the loan he made and had not the least notion of where on earth he could get the money to pay it with. The arrival of Colonel Laurens with cash from France lifted him out of the difficulty—fortuitously. He had taken a long chance, and luck had favored the gambler.

This was the time when Washington showed again his resources as a commander by wholly outwitting his enemy. He sedulously fostered in the mind of Sir Henry Clinton the belief that what was intended was an attack on New York. This he achieved by writing faked dispatches and sending them where he knew they would be captured by Clinton's spies and scouts. Clinton, in feverish anxiety, ordered Cornwallis, who was being harassed in Virginia by Lafayette and Wayne, to keep close to the sea whence he could come quickly to the defense of New York when the Allies' attack should start. Therefore, Cornwallis dug himself in at Yorktown.

The French government had agreed to devote six million livres (about $1,200,000) to that year's campaign in America, and Morris was dragging the machine along in the wake of that promise. Bills for

fragments of this appropriation came at intervals into his office and must be sold. The next day after he had started for the camp, his assistant and substitute, Gouverneur Morris, makes this entry in the Diary:

August 8. Sent for Mr. Salomons, the Broker.

It is the beginning of a long series of such entries, but at the outset the alliance does not promise well.

There is then in Philadelphia one Chaloner whose operations in French bills have caused uneasiness to the superintendent. Early that morning Mr. Chaloner has been in the office, in answer to a summons, no doubt, and being put upon the carpet has promised amendment and that he will not sell a bill for less than six shillings. When he is gone, the assistant has Salomon in and informs him of the treaty with Chaloner. Upon that understanding Gouverneur Morris thinks Salomon may safely proceed to press the sale of bills. There has continued to be a great but surreptitious business at cut rates, to the breaking down of the market and the injury of the public cause. No one will pay the government broker six shillings for bills when one can get them easily at five and a half or less. In the superintendent's office they do not know who these undersellers are, but Salomon knows.

Gouverneur Morris writes in the Diary, which he kept up in his chief's absence:

He informs me of Sundry Persons selling French Bills. I desire him to gain Information of the Persons, the Sums, the Rates,

to call on them and urge them to keep up the Price, to threaten them, to give me intelligence tomorrow morning.[1]

Salomon went forth and sought the vendors, to all of whom he was well known. Grounds on which he could appeal are plain enough. The difficulties of the government were so great it was threatened with collapse under them. Hopeless ruin would follow for the cause for which so much had been sacrificed unless it could have quick financial relief. The only hope lay in these bills. No doubt he urged them to think first of their country, and might as well have talked to the wooden figureheads that stared from the ships' bows across his Front Street. It was useless for him to point out that he, who had been an American only nine years, would starve rather than help the enemies of independence. He went back to Morris to report that neither appeals nor threats had gone home to the greedy brokers.

Gouverneur Morris was of quick and apprehensive mind. He thought over this reverse and believed he saw a way out of it. At once he went off in haste to see the Chevalier de la Luzerne, Minister of France.

His idea now was to loosen at once a mass of the bills, fifty thousand livres, sell them at four and a half shillings and so absorb all the ready money, whereby they should throw the brokers so far out of business that thereafter the market would react and the remaining bills could be sold for six shillings.

De la Luzerne listened to this dreamy proposal but could not see any use in it. The prospective loss of a

[1] Diary, August 9.

shilling and a half on every five livres in fifty thousand struck him into a chill, and he would have naught of it.

Frustrated here, Morris works out another scheme. He obtains from de la Luzerne one bill of fifty thousand livres in exchange for many smaller bills that total the same amount. He then delivers this to Salomon with instructions to sell it on time or for credit at six shillings.

This, for the moment, took the bill market out of the hands of the vendors. The highest cash price for bills was five shillings, six pence.

But it produced no ready money, and ready money was the thing that the government must have if it was to go on and not stop. It seems that Gouverneur Morris had not well considered this phase of the situation, and when it occurred to him he was nettled by it.

The next incident in the story fell in to show against what obstacles of prejudice often a Jew must strive to perform his duties to his country. The matter of selling bills and the market for them had been under discussion, and after Salomon had gone away, Gouverneur Morris wrote this letter:

Office of Finance, 10th August, 1781

Mr. Haym Salomon:

Sir:

I am much surprised at the Information you gave me this morning of the Sales of Bills on such long credit. Before you ventured on anything of that sort you should have given me notice of it. Though I permitted a certain Sum to be sold on Credit, I had no Idea of any Thing of that Sort being carried to such an Extent. However, as you have done it I will not

falsify your Promise but in future you must not Sell on Credit at all, nor under six shillings for Cash. I will write to Mr. Morris and should he think proper the Direction may be altered but not otherwise. I must insist upon an Account immediately of what Bills you have sold and on what Rates of Credit. I mean as those disposed of within a week past. If you have sold any under six shillings as this was contrary to express Instructions it shall not be complied with.

I am yours &c.[1]

It must be admitted this was a fairly stiff and disagreeable letter and manifestly unwarranted. It was written by Gouverneur Morris, who knew nothing about the conditions governing the bill market, to one that knew all about them; and it was couched in terms sure to be gallingly offensive to a sensitive man aware of his single desire to serve. Many a man under such conditions would have quit the game in disgust. Perhaps most men would have done so: certainly every man that had in his mental make-up anything small or selfish. The business he was doing for the Finance Office was nothing to Salomon's profit, and if his contributions met with no better recognition, he might as well leave the superintendent to flounder on as he could.

It appears that if he felt any such resentment he conquered it and kept steadily on with his task. He must have known that he was right and the younger Morris was wholly wrong, and in due time he had the satisfaction of a complete vindication and the adoption of the very policy the letter had censured [2]

[1] There is no signature in Morris's letter book, but the authorship is plain.

[2] Diary of March 8, 1782, for instance, and elsewhere.

—in language that might have been deemed intolerably harsh. We are to suppose a man that had risked hanging that he might promote desertion among the Hessians was too resolute to be turned aside by the paper bullets of young Mr. Morris. The other Morris had reason before he was through to give thanks that "the Jew broker" was so broad of vision and stout of heart.

The entry in the Diary referring to this matter is much less truculent.

Aug. 9. Salomon informs me that he has sold from Sixty to Eighty thousands Livres at 6/ on a credit of eight months. I refuse and direct it at four months payable part in Hard the remainder monthly. Bills are this day 5/6 the highest.

The distress of the civil servants grew more acute. Many of them were reduced to mendicancy. For them the wolf was not merely at the door; he was looking in at the window. Every day the office was thronged with destitute men that pathetically besought the superintendent for money. Money, money, any sum of money of any kind, anything that looked enough like money to buy bread. Blood from a grindstone would be easier had. On August 14, Robert Morris, who had returned from the Dobbs Ferry conference, recorded his hope that in six weeks he might have enough money to pay the neediest. Otherwise it was a daily game of evasion and postponement. Take a few entries of different dates in the Diary of this distracted man.

Constant application for money. . . .

Various fruitless applications made to me for money. . . .

Sundry applications for money. . . .

Officers long without any pay. . . .

Sometimes the blunt items have a kind of eloquence.

Sept. 7. Colo. Jno. Laurens applied for money on account of 9 months pay due him. I answer that I cannot consistently order this pay therefore offer my private purse, which he declined and I directed the above advance of 270 hard dollars on account of the United States for which he is to account.

Sept. 9. Colon'l Charles Stewart applied for money for his department, alledging his being obliged to follow the Army. I told him to borrow 100 hard dollars and draw upon me for them as these dollars are to pay his Officers & C.

Sept. 10. Mr. Dan'l Clark as attorney to Oliver Pollock, Esqr. came to solicit payment of the Debt due to the latter who is like to be ruined for want of it.

Constant applications for Money, some of which I supply and some must wait until money comes in.

Capt. Hazlewood applies for Money on account of his Contract and with reluctance I was obliged to put him off. Lieut. Pepin applied for Money, postponed.

Sept. 11. It seems as if every person connected in Public Service entertain an Opinion that I am full of Money for they are constantly applying even down to the common express Riders and give me infinite interruption so that it is hardly possible to attend to Business of more Consequence. I have been obliged to advance to the paymaster Genls. department all the Money I had to complete the payment of a Month's pay to the Troops under Gen'l Lincoln. Mr. Anspach, paymaster of Colo. Pickering's department applies daily for Money but cannot yet be supplied with the Sums required. Gen'l St. Clair calls again for money to pay 500 recruits of the Pennsylvania Line to enable them to join the Southern Army, which I hope soon to Accomplish.

Sept. 12. The usual applications for money this morning

which I shall use my utmost endeavor to procure there being very little on hand this morning.

Colo. Miles applies for money. Mr. Morse Clerk in the Secrety's Office calls on same subject—Gen'l Schuyler's express, M. Lowe & the Hon'ble Mr. Cattle all of them attending for money.

Sept. 13. Colo'l Miles applies most pressing for Money. I consented to his buying Wood for the Barracks and prisoners.

For several days past have been endeavoring to borrow money but find it very scarce.

Sept. 15. I decline paying any money. . . . Sundry applications for money this day.

Sept. 17. During the absence of the Superintendent, Mr. Pierce called and mentioned that the Honorable Mr. Mathews has recommended the issuing Warrants in Favor of the Officers of South Carolina for Specie as they were in great Want. Told Mr. Pierce that all the officers were in want. Mr. Mercier called with a warrant is much distressed &c. Told him we had no money.

Sept. 18. A gentleman in distress for want of money due to him from the Qr. Masters department applied very pressingly for money and it hurt my feelings much not to be able to relieve him.

Mr. Anspach attended for money. . . .

The paymaster General applied for Money for two Officers desired him to make such applications in writing.

This was the task of superintending the finance of a country that had no finance but only an army of literally hungry creditors. Life around that office seems never to have wanted variety and incident. What it most lacked was peace and a chance for its inmates to look honest men in the face.

CHAPTER VIII

The Flags at Their Feet

BY grace of coin that Robert Morris had supplied on a shoestring, or less, the allied armies were now moving rapidly southward to attack Cornwallis. In consequence General Sir Henry Clinton in New York was not the only person to be shaken with alarms and rumors. A report flew around that to checkmate Washington, Clinton was about to march out of New York and attack Philadelphia. This, then, cried the timid, is the purpose of those preparations that have so long been reported from New York, and they made ready to dig themselves in for a siege.

Everything that happened anywhere seemed to have an evil repercussion for the Finance Office. This was not less baleful than the others. Morris records:

Sept. 19, 1781. I have been teared [his own word—I do not know what it means] and harassed the whole day for money and assistance in consequence of said alarm.

Mr. Peters of the Board of War called to know if I could supply Money to remove Stores, Prisoners &c from this City which I answered in the Negative, as no Money is in the Treasury and my personal Credit already pledged for Considerable Sums borrowed to forward the Public Service in several branches, which must be repaid and my other Engagements fulfilled before I

Strike out anew, otherwise, I shall soon lose that Credit which has hitherto been so useful. Colo Miles applied for money to enable him to send off Expresses but I had none for him.

This morning begins as usual with applications for money.

20. Engaged they should wait contentedly for their money untill Ours arrive from Boston.

21. Gen'l St. Clair attended for Money none to give him.

The Cloathier General for Money. I could not assist him.

He could not provide for even the simplest necessities of military operations; no, nor for the things demanded for the suffering.

Doctor Oliphant applied respecting the Estimate for Lint and Medicine for the Southern Army and I am sorry it is not in my power to give him encouragement to Expect Money &c wherewith to procure these Supplies.

The name of General St. Clair appears often in the Diary, and always as a caller at the Finance Office begging for money.

Major-General Arthur St. Clair, this was—grandson of a belted earl, whatever that may mean; a man of varied employments, much limelight, and a reputation that after long fluctuating to and fro is still debated.

He was born in Scotland, the earl in his pedigree being he of Rosslyn. At first he studied medicine. Then he bought a commission in the British army, came in the French and Indian War to America with Admiral Boscowen, fought with Amherst and with Wolfe, married an American girl and settled in Pennsylvania, where he was mill-owner and colonel of militia. The militia end of his diversions carried

him at the outbreak of the Revolution to Cambridge and the staff of Washington.

Years afterward, a committee of the United States Senate called him one of the best commanders of the Revolutionary army. It was a justifiable view, but later investigators have not shared it, apparently for no reason except the strange passion that has come upon us to discredit every man connected with the Revolution. He has been accused of giving up Ticonderoga with needless haste before Burgoyne's advance, but the military critics do not share this verdict. His services were less spectacular than those of Wayne, Sullivan, Morgan, Lee and Marion but perhaps no less real. Few men have closed their careers in more melancholy fashion. His defeat by the Indians in 1791 ended his connections with the army, and, having been due to his own great carelessness, clouded his fame. The last years of his life, spent in poverty and a lonely log hut in the Alleghanies, must always have a poignant interest for the sympathetic.

At the Finance Office, year 1781, he was but one in a long line of the needy and the clamoring.

Sept. 22. This day the Quarter Rent is due for the Office which I mean to give up and sent word to the Landlord accordingly.

24. This day gave up the Office next to my House and moved Books and Papers over to the Marine Office Which being rented for a year on Publick Account and little used by any other Department I know I shall employ it as the Office of Finance by that means saving L. 140 p ann'm rent paid for the Other Office.

24. Gene'l St. Clair applied for money, I offered him paper.

Morris is supposed, on no good evidence, to have been deficient in a sense of humor, being all for business and the balance sheet; but he certainly must have had a fund of irony, however grim or even cruel. "I offered him paper." He must have chuckled to himself when he wrote that, paper being worth at that time about two cents on the dollar, if anything.

The next day he ventured upon an expenditure. He engaged Jacob Smith to clean the office, keep it in order, run errands and do other work for One Hard Dollar a day.

26. Many applications for Money this day.

27. Mons'r Da La Vallette applied for Money but he not speaking my Language nor I his appointed him to call tomorrow morning.

Oct. 6. Gener'l St. Clair applies for more money which I cannot consistently advance but as he says the Quarter Master ought to reimburse certain expenditures made by the Gene'l for the Public Acc't I have referred him to that Officer.

Mr. Pierce the Paymaster General applied for 300 dollars due on an accepted Order for part pay of the Detachment under Gen'l Lincoln which I shall pay.

Mr. Gibson reports that there is a dispute in the account of the Widow Marshall for rent which must be settled before I order payment . . . Mr. Gibson also requests payment of Rent due to him which I cannot comply with at present.

8. Gen'l Irvine applied for Cloathing for the Soldiers at Ft. Pitt and Money for himself shall try to supply him.

The States were still obligated to pay the troops they furnished to the common cause, but generally forgot or neglected the duty. Strange to say, sometimes when they remembered it they gave to the superintendent chiefly a new distress. Thus, when Con-

necticut sent money to pay the arrearage of its soldiers, Morris had to present a sudden and urgent request that the payment should be for no more than one month for otherwise the soldiers of other states would be incited to revolt.[1]

The ancient and troublous question of the freedom of the seas also arose like a ghost to vex him. On October 8 he had a long conference with Edmund Randolph and James Madison on this matter, but they seem to have reached no satisfactory conclusion. If the principle that a neutral flag protected ship and cargo could be recognized the Revolution would be in better shape, for then its produce could go safely abroad. But the trouble was that England wanted to have the doctrine upheld when her interests ran that way and trampled over it when trampling would advance her cause.

The high price of certain commodities must have annoyed all careful souls. When uniform suits reached 6 pounds (equal to about $16 each in real and not stage money) thoughtful observers said the limit of extravaganza in economics had been reached. The next week prices went still higher. A man's hat actually cost $4 in coin. Papa Wisdom in the person of Morris, and he Scotch, waited until there was a reaction from such folly and seized a chance to contract for 290 suits at 6 pounds each, thereby saving money for the treasury.

Oct. 15. Colo. Harrison of the Artillery calls with a letter from General Washington requesting an advance of Money. I direct an application to the Paymaster and Board of War.

[1] Diary, September 7, 1781.

Colo. Jno. Lawrence Judge Advocate General applied for his month's pay but not in my power to relieve him.

Major Pierce with a Letter from General Green wanting Money.

Doctor Bond applied with a variety of Estimates for Stores, Medicines &c I lament the want of money but determine to help him all in my Power.

20. Mr. David Duncan applied again respecting flour to be delivered at the North River but as he asked 2 doll^{rs} p hund^{d} wt I broke off all treaty that price being much too high.

This day went out of town with my Sons who set out for France to be educated.

The greatest event of the war came on and the first word of it left him as cold as ice. Cornwallis had surrendered; the British line, bent backward to the sea, had broken. There is no more remarkable entry in his Diary than that of this supreme day:

22. This morning received Advices of the Surrender of Ld Cornwallis to Gen'l Washington, but not by official account A multitude of applications for Money.

Whether the army wins or loses, he must be getting on with his job to provide something like finance and something like currency.

On October 23 he was cheered by the arrival from Boston of Mr. Benjamin Dudley, whom he had sent for to come and talk about the establishing of a mint. The war had been on six years; five years and more had passed since the United States launched itself as an independent nation. It had no more of a mint than it had of banyan trees, and the only approach to a circulating medium was what was left of the old colonial currency, the dishonored flotsam of Conti-

nental paper, and the uncertain effigies printed by some of the States. And just at this time, the money of the State of Pennsylvania, ranking among the best, slumped to two and a half for one, the "one" meaning coin, whenever that could be had.

On the same day Continental money was officially and nominally quoted at seventy-five for one. In reality it was at something like one thousand for one, and people that used it at all used it for shaving paper.

But for a moment come back to the Diary.

. . . Sundry applications for money, as usual.

Oct. 24. This Morning Colo. Tilghman arrived with despatches from His Excellency Genl Washington giving Account of the surrender of Earl Cornwallis and his Army at York in Virginia to the combined forces under his Excellency's Command. Sent for Mr. Kinnan the Copper Plate Printer who thinks his Salary insufficient.

25. Begins as usual with Applications for Money. Mr. Parker of the Loan Office of South Carolina called and informed that the papers of the Office are at Hagers Town in Maryland and that he has not Money to defray his Expenses of bringing them hither &c &c

He was working all this time on his national-bank scheme and had it now ready to launch. One of the directors was James Wilson, a remarkable figure of the times whom we shall encounter again, and a great friend of Haym Salomon. By birth he was Scotch; in spirit all American. At first a school teacher, he took to the law, studied under John Dickinson, and became one of the leaders of the American bar. There was no more of flinch in him than there was in Alex-

ander MacDougall; Salomon seems to have picked the unflinching kind.

As far back as January, 1775, when various doughy patriots in New York were running to cover and James Rivington in his Tory newspaper was pointing out the horrors of disloyalty, James Wilson arose in the convention of Pennsylvania and delivered a marvelous great ringing speech in favor of stern resistance and the rights of the colonies. He was delegate from Pennsylvania to the Congress that made the Declaration, which he signed; and throughout the war he was a restless but reasoning patriot whose counsels were sought by all the leaders. At the time Salomon formed a friendship with him, he was acting as advocate-general for France in its relations to the States. As Salomon was financial agent for France, the two were naturally thrown together. Wilson's consent to be one of the directors of the bank gave Morris a keen satisfaction.

Another notable figure in Salomon's list of friends was the peppery von Steuben, Frederick William Augustus, baron and so forth, whose services in drilling and organizing the Revolutionary troops went so far beyond praise. The worthy baron, though of great ability and excellent mind, could never master the intricacies of the native dialect, and often his long, thundering, lightning-winged objurgations went entirely astray for lack of ears that knew what it was all about.

Salomon, to whom most languages were like a glove, must have been as found money to the explosive inspector-general; he had somebody now that

could understand donner and blitzen. When he was twenty-seven, he had been adjutant-general in the Prussian army; when thirty-two grand marshal and general of the guard. These honors, with an ample fortune and the chances of a great career at home, he tossed aside to go to America and give himself to the cause of the Americans. Some things do not happen; one of them is a sacrifice so great for the mere sake of what we are now invited to believe was an alien family quarrel of no importance to anybody. The American Revolution must have seemed much more than that to draw to its support at the price of so much personal loss a man like Frederick von Steuben.

It owed to him an incalculable debt. In 1777 he had landed in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, proceeded thence to Washington's camp, offered his services and been made inspector-general. Within a few months the results of his labors were seen in the straightening out of the woeful military disorder he had found about him. But even he could not make headway against a filliped payroll and the lack of funds. He could not get his own uniform replaced, and how could he make comments about the uniforms of others?

In 1781 he found himself like the other officers of the army, destitute of a sou to bless himself with. He joined the great throng that daily laid siege to the unfortunate Superintendent of Finance. From Morris he drifted infallibly to the open door of the broker's office in "Front Street between Market and Arch," and found there asylum and that unbeliev-

able thing, a hand outstretched that did not seem to tire of giving.

Haym Salomon, who had given his money to the government, was now giving it to the government's threadbare servants and victims. He helped St. Clair and he helped von Steuben—helped them to keep alive and to continue to serve. Many times he salvaged the valiant baron with timely loans. To anyone in distress, he seems to have held forth an open purse —if they were in the government service, at least. The government starved them; he fed them—being a Polish Jew, nine years in America.

The Diary embalms the names of many heroes once celebrated, now forgotten.

Nov. 2. Received a letter from Major General Howe for money and answered in the negative.

Robert Howe of North Carolina, this was, whose activities in behalf of the Revolution had been so marked that he was honored by being expressly exempted from the proclamation of amnesty with which Sir Henry Clinton attempted to win back the rebels. Also, by an expedition that Clinton sent of nine hundred men under Cornwallis for the sole purpose of destroying all of Howe's extensive plantation and other property near Brunswick. He fought in the southern campaigns and led an expedition into Florida, at that time a British possession, that was checked by an outbreak of fever among his soldiers. By this chance alone he seems to have missed enduring fame. The British troops in Florida were few and feeble and Howe was on the way to annex the

whole territory when the epidemic came and erased all his projects.

On the day after the receipt of Howe's appeal, being November 3, 1781, Haym Salomon stood in the door of his office in Front Street and witnessed a scene that must have thrilled him to his soul.

That morning arrived the colors taken by Washington at Yorktown. As far as Chester they had been conveyed by Colonel Humphreys, of Washington's staff. At Chester they were received by Colonel Tilghman, and the two, with an escort, guarded them toward the capital.

"The Philadelphia City Troop of Light Horse went out to meet them," says Morris, "and became the Standard Bearers as 24 Gentlemen Privates of that corps carried each of them one of the Colours displayed, the American and French Flags preceding the Captured Trophies."

In this order the procession made its way down Market Street to Front, which it threaded long enough to pause before the Coffee House, near Salomon's office. It then proceeded to Chestnut Street and moved to the State House (Independence Hall), where in a great silence the colors were deposited before the session of Congress.

When he recalled what he had sacrificed for the cause that triumphed that day, what it had cost him, and how near he had come to dying for it, a deeply religious nature like Salomon's must have been moved to an outpouring of gratitude such as the Jews, taught by the Psalmist, are accustomed to charge with apt expression of fervent feeling.

At the invitation of His Excellency the Minister of France, Morris "attended at the Romish church" a *Te Deum* sung there to celebrate so great a day.

In the Evening His Excellency the Chev[r] La Luzerne, French Minister had his House beautifully illuminated, a very large company were invited to a Concert and Oratorio after which an Elegant and Excellent Supper, &c.

But the scene that made the greatest impression upon Morris was the reception of those flags by Congress.

I give his own words as he entered them in his Diary, merely observing that in the records of the time I have not found anything else so simply eloquent and so suggestive of the fierce ordeals of that conflict.

. . . where they were laid at the Feet of Congress who were Sitting, and many of the Members tell me that instead of Viewing the transaction as a mere matter of Joyful Ceremony which they expected to do They instantly felt themselves impressd with Ideas of the most Solemn & Awful nature, it brought to their Minds the distresses our Country has been exposed to, the Calamities we have repeatedly suffered, the perilous situation which our affairs have almost always been in, and they could not but recall the Threats of Lord North that he would bring America to his Feet on unconditional terms of Submission. But Glory be with Thee, O Lord God, who hath Vouchsafed to rescue from Slavery and from Death, these thy Servants.

CHAPTER IX

A Desperate Battle

THE day after the celebration of the Happy Event at Yorktown, Robert Morris had an idea. He thought upon the improved prospect for the American arms and believed that without loss of time it should be capitalized.

Therefore, according to his practice, he sent first for his little friend from Front Street. More and more Salomon was becoming his reliance; it is odd to notice how in an almost regular progression the entries about him multiply in the Diary.

On this occasion, Morris asked his coadjutor to raise the rate on bills of exchange so as to make them six shillings, three pence, for every five livres of French money, five livres being roughly equivalent to a specie dollar. Shillings meant Pennsylvania currency. Before the good news from Yorktown the price had been six shillings, or five shillings, six pence and even less, much less, when the outlook was more than usually stormy.

Haym Salomon must have had his doubts of the basis for this optimism, but the Diary does not show that he dissented. It never shows, in fact, that he objected to anything that was wanted of him. There is usually an entry of what that was and then some sign

or symbol that the thing had been done. In this instance, if he doubted his doubt was justified.

For the state of the national ship and the heavy weather it was making did not essentially improve. Easily now the faultless accuracy of hindsight can perceive that to all intents and purposes the war was over, but the most discerning could not see this, nor anything like it, at the close of 1781 and the beginning of 1782. What was at hand, so far as any one could make out of the welter, was more fighting, carried on with more vim and a larger hope but still no end of fighting. Washington expected this and laid his plans for the next season's campaign. They were plans that would call for money, much money, always money.

The money must be furnished by the Superintendent of Finance, and where he was to obtain it was a thought that rode him like a nightmare.

Naturally, the fact, evident to us, that the British cause in America had been finally shattered, was long as invisible to him as to his fellows. True, the only British forces now left uncaptured were shut up in Savannah, Charleston and New York, but more and many more might come at any time.

Men with eyes and minds fixed upon close-at-hand battling cannot think much about ultimate chances. What was best remembered in America was Lord North's threats and the savageries of warfare. That the Allies at Yorktown had overthrown North no less than Cornwallis was a thing no one in America suspected. The question that absorbed all minds was whether fresh reenforcements were to be sent this

month or next, and then whether de Grasse with his fleet at sea and the Allied troops on shore could defeat them as fast as they should appear. The great victory of de Grasse over Graves in Chesapeake Bay had raised the American hope but there were still all the ugly chances of war somber as ever in every man's thoughts.

Fighting of a kind went on almost daily around New York, which, it was believed, Washington and Rochambeau would move against as soon as the season opened, and while that critical movement was awaited, the army must be maintained at the top of its strength.

Besides the regular army charges, there were now all these prisoners to be supported. The same old troubles, only worse, glowered daily upon Morris. Immense demands for money, and against them only a ghastly penury was the short and simple tale of the exchequer. Article VIII of the Articles of Confederation, the flimsy bond fashioned more or less to hold the States together, provided that each State should raise money for the common defense and welfare by taxing itself according to the value of the land owned or surveyed within it and of the buildings and improvements thereon. But the Articles of Confederation, although debated for nearly two years, were not adopted by Congress until July 2, 1778, and not agreed to by Maryland, the last of the States, until March 1, 1781. Up to that date they had been like so much paper stock—covered with words that meant nothing—and there was among the States not even the semblance of a good imitation of a

working bond of union. Congress had no more power to legislate nationally than it had to fix the habitation of the great Mogul. All these years the beautiful Article VIII about taxation had slept with the dead. It was now only beginning to come to life.

If indeed one could say so much of it in most of the States. It was one thing to agree to Article VIII and another thing to get it into motion. The States had still to provide the machinery to ascertain, levy, and collect this unwonted taxation, and while they were stumbling into action the treasury yawned and its needy creditors starved.

Still there were all these soldiers that must be fed and clothed, still these destitute officers that must be provided with the means to keep alive, these clamoring contractors that must be paid; the whole establishment must be kept up with the best attainable front if the fruits of Yorktown and Eutaw Springs were not to be lost, the weary years go for nothing, the French abandon an ally so weak and ineffectual and the whole thing slip back into ruin. Between the battle of Long Island and the first negotiations for peace, men like the two Morrises, who knew the inside of things, spent many agonizing days, but none worse than those of the early part of 1782.

January 7 of that year came with a glimpse of the sun to these panting souls, for it saw the inauguration of one of Robert Morris's pet cures for the national distemper.

This Day the National Bank of North America opens to transact business. This Institution I am persuaded will flourish under

the Management of Honest Men and Honest Measures, the present Directors are such Men and the present System of Measures are founded in Justice and Equity therefore I shall most Chearfully assist by all means in my power to Establish and Support this Bank. And as a beginning I have this day issued my warrant on the Treasury for 200,000 Dollars in part of the Shares which I have subscribed in behalf of the Public. I also paid a Warrant of 2000 for five shares for Wm. Denning Esqr and a warrant for 2000 Dollars received of Joseph Pennell Esqr for five shares for Jno. Langdon Esqr.

He could hardly foresee that the day was not far off when the bank that was the child of his theories and dreams would show him to the door and cast off its creator.

Haym Salomon was one of its sponsors. On the first subscription he joined for one share of $400; on the second for two shares of $500 each for himself, ten shares for De Heyder, Veydt and Company and four shares for Joshua Maddox Wallace.[1]

So unsettled were all financial foundations that there were in common use four or five standards of money value, hard dollars (or specie), Continental dollars (or junk), livres, pounds, shillings and others, and the war was over before Congress dealt with this confusion worse confounded even to the extent of appointing a committee to consider a scheme by which these units could be reduced to a common denominator.[2]

But meanwhile the pressure never relented and the plaints of the unpaid continued to resound about

[1] The total capital stock was $400,000. The firm for which Salomon subscribed seems to have been Dutch.

[2] Diary, January 7, 1782.

the Finance Office and shake the nerves of the superintendent.

The same day of the bank opening, January 7:

Mr. Hall called on his business, but I could not see him, being hunted and fatigued to Death.

Two entries seem to hint at a story of more than usual misfortune.

Dec. 18. Major Smith of Carlisle applied in the most importunate and pressing manner for money on Acc't of Debt he contracted as a Dep't'y Commiss'r under Colo. Blaine [1] and truly sorry I am that it is not in my Power to assist this Gentleman whose Patriotism have occasioned his present distress.

Feb. 18. Major Smith of Carlisle—this poor Gentleman I pity very much as he has involved himself exceedingly by his exertions in the Public Service but his Circumstances do not admit of any alleviation from me consistently with the Rule by which I act. I gave him an honest account of his situation, told him he must have patience but advised him to pursue some business until Relief should come forward, not to spend his time and Attention in Seeking where it was not to be had.

Private claims and public concerns fare together. Again and again in the Diary appears Colonel Samuel Miles, Paymaster-General of the Army, on whom rests the first responsibility in relation to the unpaid troops. He comes begging for money to meet the unendurable situation with the soldiers and we find entries like this:

Nov. 16. The Paymaster General for Money for himself & his department. Referred to another day.

[1] Colonel Ephraim Blaine, Commissary General of the Continental Army. Great-grandfather of James G. Blaine.

The exigencies of his desperate position drive the superintendent to strange things. At one time he entertains a plan to get money into the treasury by immediately collecting one quarter's rent for all the houses in Philadelphia and confiscating it, a proceeding that we can imagine would have raised a notable howl from the landlords. In December of 1781 the distress of good naval officers, even men like Paul Jones and James Nicholson, becomes so acute that Morris orders the sale of naval stores in the possession of the government, the proceeds to be distributed among these destitute men. With miserly care he rakes the field to and fro to find a doit that he can use to relieve the suffering around him.

States unable to furnish a quota of money have supplied goods, produce or transportation in lieu thereof. Morris searches out these supplies and discovers that Connecticut has sent in more linen and linen tow than are immediately required. Instantly a sale and he gets a few precious dollars therefrom. On February 6, 1782, he enters into a deal to buy tobacco in Virginia and sell it in the northern provinces, from which he sees he shall reap a profit and so help out the aching void in that treasury. He will deal in anything, tobacco, surplus supplies, naval stores, a lottery, privateering, anything on the green earth that will yield to him a handful of coin.

Jan. 20 [*1782*]. George Abbot Hall Esqr informing me that he was ready to proceed for South Carolina in consequence of the appointment I had made of him to be Receiver of Continental Taxes in that State I gave him a warrant on Mr. Stanwick for 20,000 Dollars to be employed by him in purchasing

Indico to be sent hither by the Return Waggons that would otherwise come back empty, whereas I expect by this plan to clear on the Indico as much Money for the Public as will pay for the hire of the teams.

In all these operations he finds that Salomon, with his trained business intelligence, his wide connections and his handy warehouses, is the indispensable adjutant.[1] Salomon takes the goods, effects the sales and turns in the money.

Otherwise, anything is better than to undertake to pay to anybody the cash that still eludes him.

Jan. 9. Colo. John Patton on behalf of himself and the Iron Master applied for Payment of their Balances in Consequence of the reference of his letter to me by Congress on finding that said Balance amounts to about 24,000 Dollars I think the Sum more than we can part with. I have therefore proposed that he shall Fund his debt and try to borrow the Money he wants on the Credit of that Fund he agrees to try this Mode and if he can effect it he will be Content.

In his busy capacious mind he had worked out a plan by which he could defeat Chaos and Old Night that reigned in all public affairs and promised to reign there indefinitely. He purposed to consolidate the debts owed by the United States, ghostly as that national title still was, and issue bonds against them. The unoccupied lands back of the settlements were to be used as security for these bonds so as to make them salable abroad. Then the interest on them was to be met by national taxation of four kinds, a small land tax, a poll tax, an excise tax on distilled liquors,

[1] Diary, August 16, 1781.

and finally by inducing the States to give up a percentage of their taxes on imports. It is hard for a modern to understand that so far all the tariff duties that existed were levied and collected separately by each State—each being a sovereign, independent nation, and as good as the best.

From these sources Morris confidently expected to gain a revenue. He was doomed to another disappointment. To carry out his plan thirteen enactments by the thirteen separate, free, independent and sovereign nations were necessary, and he might as well have expected to pick money from the blackberry bushes. At the suggestion that a percentage of the tariff proceeds should be given to the national government, the sovereign and independent roared with indignation. We collect the money, it is ours, the goods come into our ports, why should we give up what is ours? And then about the percentage. It is manifestly unfair that a State with large imports should be assessed at the same ratio as one with small imports. And so on. Always a wrangle and never the agreement Morris needed.[1]

The proposals about the unoccupied lands went equally awry. Some of the States claimed everything back to the Alleghanies and beyond, and war between them for the possession of territory yet unconquered and almost unseen had been narrowly averted. The notion of giving this land as security for a national debt struck them as preposterous.

Still the superintendent pursued the rainbow despite all disillusions.

[1] Conf. Gay, pp. 33-35 and 49-54.

Feb. 10. Mr. S. Young applied respecting aid of Genl. Lincoln's drafts on the Treasury. I desired him to hold it Contentedly until the Import Law shall be passed by Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Maryland, as I shall take the proper measures when that was done.

General Lincoln was Secretary of War and the meaning of this entry is that the drafts of the War Department, which had armies in the field, could not be honored by the Treasury Department until three States should pass a law to share duties on imports into the country, such duties being properly a national and not a State concern. Beyond this in the chaotic it seems hard to go. A thousand able pens have described the physical battles of the Revolution, the maneuvers, marchings, strategies and shocks. In a dingy little office in Philadelphia went on every day and all day long a battle in which two men put their backs to the wall and fought against overwhelming odds the bankruptcy that would have been worse than any defeat on the battle-field. There was nothing spectacular about their fighting, but day by day it meant the turn of the balance.

These two—and one other. Statesmen may hope, the Morrises may map and plan; it is the little man from Front Street somewhere between Market and Arch that goes into the thick of the fight and brings home the trophies. Devising helps nothing unless the bills of exchange can be sold. He sells them. He has given up his two hours—from twelve to two—as the gentle autocrat of the Coffee House. In these days he is too busy finding money for the government.[1]

[1] Thirty-sixth Congress, First Session, Senate Report No. 127.

He is for the cause of the revolt and is not afraid. There are slack-lipped doubters around him, defeatists and faint-hearts, gloomy dyspeptics like Arthur Lee and so on, but so far as we can discover now, none of them among his people. The loyalty of the Jews to the American side is not a matter of assertion or surmise but only one of statistics. There were, all told, from Maine to Georgia about two thousand five hundred of them. The total population was about three million. Of this the potential fighting force was roughly three hundred thousand men. If the same ratio were applied to the Jews there would have been about two hundred and fifty of them in the Revolutionary army. Instead of two hundred and fifty there must have been easily twice as many. But there were never three hundred thousand men in the Revolutionary forces. The largest number ever under arms north and south must have been about thirty thousand—or less. The Jews in proportion to their population totals did more than any other class of persons in the country.

In Charleston, South Carolina, was a considerable Jewish colony. All about them were Tories, for it is notorious that the Revolution was less popular there than in the North; for this reason the British government sent Cornwallis and Rawdon southward. Loyalists flocked joyously to the king's banner. Not the Jews. The researches of Mr. Leon Hühner[1] have shown where the Jews stood, and made clear another interesting phase of the conflict. As a body, South Carolina Jews took with joy to

[1] Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society, No. 12, 1899.

the Revolution. A few Tories are revealed among them, but in a proportion far less than the rest of the community. On this point the testimony is sure and remarkable. "When the War of the Revolution commenced, all of this nation[1] [Jews] who were in South Carolina able to bear arms, zealously joined their country's martial ranks for the great but dubious contest. The prize to be acquired in the event of a successful issue, religious and political freedom, was great enough to induce the free offering of every patriotic exertion and even of fortune and life in the undertaking."[2] Col. J. E. D. Worthington, speaking in 1824 in behalf of the complete emancipation of the Jews in Maryland, exhibited a document proving the singular fact that a volunteer corps of infantry organized in Charleston in 1779 "was composed chiefly of Israelites residing in King Street. It was commanded by Captain Lushington and afterward fought under General Moultrie at Beaufort."[3] This company is frequently mentioned, and so is its commander, Captain Lushington, who was an active patriot from the beginning of the war to its end and figures in the reports of General Marion.[4]

The Jews have a long list of famous names to show as part of their contribution to the uprising.

[1] They were commonly so referred to in those days—as a nation instead of as members of a religious sect.

[2] Mr. Hühner discovered this in J. L. E. Shecut, *Topographical, Historical and other Sketches of Charleston,* published there in 1819.

[3] This speech was published in Philadelphia in 1829. In 1910, the American Jewish Historical Society brought out as its Publication No. 19, Mr. Hühner's researches as to this company, clearly establishing its Jewish complexion and its efficient services at the victory of Beaufort.

[4] Moultrie, *Memoirs of the American Revolution,* Vol. II, p. 314.

Mordecai Sheftall of Savannah, execrated by the British as the "Chairman of the Rebel Parochial Committee," earned that distinction by hard work for the American cause from the outbreak of the war. Appointed to be Deputy Commissary-General of Issues for the American forces in the South, he was at the siege of Savannah. When it was captured December 29, 1778, he and his son tried to escape but ran into a company of Highlanders who made them prisoners. Mordecai Sheftall was thrust into a guardhouse with instructions to the guard to watch him closely for he was "a great rebel." This command or some other shut off his food supply, and he was starving to death when a Hessian officer named Zeltman, discovering that here was a prisoner that could speak German, in an excess of joy carried him to his own quarters and gave him something to eat. But not his freedom; and the next thing he knew he was confined on the sloop-of-war *Raven,* where he found out the true nature of life on a British prison ship.[1] In the end he was exchanged and resumed his activities. This is the man that when he was wounded and incapacitated gave his salary to the surgeons for the benefit of his fellow patients.

David Emanuel, of Georgia, the first Jew in this country to hold the office of governor, was a partizan like Marion and Sumter, and between times a member of the Revolutionary Executive Council. He was captured with his little troop by a much larger company of loyalists. The loyalists in the South did not pretend to pay any attention to the rules of warfare.

[1] Markens, p. 49.

Their practice when they laid hands upon a Revolutionist was to shoot him on the spot. They now prepared to carry out this plan upon Emanuel and his companions. One of these was a Baptist and asked that before he was shot he should have a chance to say his prayers. He fell upon his knees and all eyes were fixed upon him. At that moment Emanuel made a sudden bound, shook off his guard and dashed among the horses of the Tories tethered close by. The Tories could not fire at him without killing their own mounts. Emanuel leaped upon the back of one of the steeds and galloped away into the darkness. He was hotly pursued but probably knew the paths better than his enemies knew them. He disappeared in the night, made his way back to the American lines and resumed his service—he and his two brothers, who were second lieutenants in the patriot army.

David Salisbury Franks, not related to the Franks family in New York, was in 1775 living in Montreal. One night some one smeared mud on the blessed bust of the blessed George III and scrawled on the base an irreverent sentiment. In the crowd that the next morning stood staring at this piece of sacrilege was a zealot who declared loudly that the perpetrator of the outrage ought to be hanged.

Young Franks dissented from this view, whereupon Crook-knee struck him in the mouth. This seemed to be going well but had a consequence Crook-knee had not thought of, for young Franks had fists of his own and knocked his assailant flat on his back.

An outcry resulted, the troops were called, and young Franks was marched off to prison, surrounded with bayonets. Ten thousand pounds bail was refused for him and he was locked up on the charge of speaking disrespectfully of his Gracious Majesty the King. At the end of a week he was suddenly released without trial. The American invasion came soon, and Franks joined it as a volunteer. After the retreat, he entered a Massachusetts regiment, earned promotion, was on Arnold's staff in Philadelphia, demanded an inquiry when Arnold's perfidy was revealed, won a prompt and unequivocal vindication, resumed his place in the army, was sent abroad on important diplomatic missions and figures repeatedly in Morris's Diary, as an applicant for money for the public service, but not on his own account.

His devotion to the Revolution was purely one of principle. He was a resident of Canada. The blessed Stamp Act meant nothing to him—nor he to Hecuba.

When Haym Salomon wrote to Isaac Franks about his escape from The Provost he was handling a subject already familiar to his brother-in-law.

This youth was only seventeen when the war began. He was among the earliest volunteers, paid for his own equipment, had part in the battle of Long Island, and was taken prisoner when New York was captured by the British. They shut him up in The Provost among the victims of the gentle Cunningham. After three months he made his escape, but whether by the golden-guinea route is not known. He returned at once to the army, in 1778 was made

forage-master, and when his service in that capacity was done joined the Seventh Massachusetts as ensign, until Washington took him on his staff as an aide with the rank of lieutenant-colonel.

While we are on this subject, we may as well have more illustrations. They would not be necessary if so many persons did not share the old dumb fabulous belief about the Jew's indifference to his country.

Manuel Mordecai Noah of North Carolina joined the American forces, fought on the staff of Francis Marion, was transferred to the North and fought on the staff of Washington himself. He is said to have given to the Revolutionary cause virtually his entire fortune.

According to an unpublished letter of Jared Sparks, a New York Jew named Gomez undertook to enlist a company for the war and lead it. Members of Congress remonstrated with him because he was then sixty-eight years old. The stout-hearted Gomez had his reply ready: "I can stop a bullet as well as a younger man."

There was no more dashing and romantic figure on the American side than Major Benjamin Nones, the Jewish Lafayette.

He was born in Bordeaux, France, where he was living when he learned of the American Revolution and what it meant. Not yet twenty years old, he went to America, enlisted as a volunteer, fought under Pulaski and at the siege of Savannah was cited for conspicuous bravery and daring. He was in Captain Verdier's regiment of Pulaski's legion and after the

battle Verdier sent him an official letter praising him in the highest terms. He fought throughout the war and won his rank by deserving. Afterward he was an intimate friend and at one time the partner of Haym Salomon, and one of the first foreign-born residents to be naturalized at the close of the war. He was for many years parnas of Mickvé Israel, the congregation that Salomon had helped, and in 1800 he published a warm defense of Judaism and the republican principle, seeing the two akin.[1]

Jacob Leon and Benjamin Moses also served on the staff of Pulaski. When de Kalb fell in the battle of Camden three Jewish officers are said to have carried his body from the field.[2] Of forty-six prominent Jews that were members of Masonic lodges at the outbreak of the Revolution, twenty-four became officers in the Revolutionary army. Mr. Hühner has demonstrated from the Jewish names on the Revolutionary pension lists and from other sources the extraordinary response of the Jews to the American appeal.

There can be no question about this blood inheritance of an instinctive resistance to tyranny. In the early days of New York the man that stood out against the petty oppressions of Peter Stuyvesant was Asser Levy, a Jew. Stuyvesant would not let Jews do guard duty and then tried to tax them for

[1] McCall, Simon Wolf and Peters may be consulted for further details of these services. Also, various publications of the American Jewish Historical Society most valuable. I have not found better examples of patient, conscientious research work.

[2] Markens, p. 126. The statement is open to doubt, as it appears that de Kalb's body fell into the hands of the British. But Mr. Markens may be right in part.

failing to do it. Levy fought him all the way to Amsterdam, beat him on that and other points and by steady persistence won something like an even chance for his people. Incidentally, it was he that built that Lutheran Church I have spoken of. Well, a grandson of his, also an Asser Levy, was a distinguished officer in a New Jersey regiment throughout the Revolution.

In Publication No. 23 of the American Jewish Historical Society, printed in 1915, appeared an entirely new department of the Jews' Revolutionary activities. The infant Republic having but a shadow of a navy, its warfare at sea came to be carried on by privateers, and Mr. Hühner, digging studiously into old records, disclosed the fact that Jewish money and Jewish enterprise furnished a large part of the American privateer fleet. As early as 1777, when privately armed vessels were but beginning to bustle about in the war, the *Wilkes,* ten guns, out of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, was owned by a Jew, captained by a Jew and two of its three bonders were Jews. Moses M. Hays of Boston was conspicuously busy fitting out these vessels and bonding them. So were Abraham Sasportas and Benjamin Seixas of Philadelphia, Benjamin Seixas being a brother of the Rev. Gershom Seixas, the patriotic rabbi of New York, who closed his congregation rather than live under British rule. The most indefatigable of the privateersmen was Isaac Moses of Philadelphia, who was interested alone or with Robert Morris in no fewer than eight of these effective implements of war.[1] They had their due place in winning the

[1] Mr. Hühner, pp. 170-173.

American triumph. The Revolutionary privateers took about seven hundred British vessels, caused British merchants a loss of about eighteen million dollars, and drove them to din the ears of Parliament with clamors that the war must end.

Jews were open-handed givers to the cause they had taken up. Isaac Moses, the friend and partner of Robert Morris, helped him out of tight places, contributed fifteen thousand dollars to the Continental treasury, and when in 1784 Morris was anxious about the bill in the New York legislature to levy import duties for the public revenue, Moses went to New York and helped to put it over.

Herman and Aaron Levy of Philadelphia with others of their sect repeatedly advanced money to the poor old national exchequer, and Aaron's generosity is referred to in a quaint report of the Board of Treasury printed in the "Journal of Congress," March 29, 1781.

They had the spirit of John Dickinson, the distinguished lawyer.

"It is not our duty to leave wealth to our children, but it is our duty to leave liberty to them. We have counted the cost of this contest and find nothing so dreadful as volunteer slavery."

CHAPTER X

The Measure of the Spirit

HAYM SALOMON, living with his increasing family in Front Street, going daily in and out of the Office of Finance as its trusted confidant and adviser, must have met or seen there most of the men that played notable parts in the Revolutionary drama. Nearly all of them were callers, at one time or another, for nearly all were creditors of the shadowy and halting government.

With others came Captain Landais, lunatic.

On January 16, 1782, this madman called at the Finance Office with a demand for money. He went away without it, and so going occasioned no grief in any bosom there.

No more baffling figure appears in these annals. Ostensibly because of an ungovernable temper, he had been dismissed from the French navy, but the real cause of his cashiering was the discovery that he was crazy. Next he turned up as an applicant for a command in the American service. Assumably, he was one of those queerest of the demented that are able to act at times as if they were perfectly sane. Either so, or the commissioners were blind to the symptoms of mania, because the next news we have of him, a susceptible but not inquisitive Congress,

on somebody's recommendation, had bestowed upon him a commission and the captaincy of the frigate *Alliance.*

It was in the immortal battle off Flamborough Head, September 23, 1779, that he achieved to his most undesirable eminence. With the *Alliance* he had been attached to the little squadron commanded by John Paul Jones. When Jones in the *Bon Homme Richard* was attacked by the *Serapis* and the *Countess of Scarborough,* Landais was ordered to come to his support. Instead of doing so, he hovered to and fro until the *Bon Homme Richard* was between him and the *Serapis,* when he began to fire, his shots taking effect on the *Richard* but not on the enemy. Jones lost a dozen men by this action of his consort, and his ship was hit repeatedly near the water line.

Landais now drew off and waited until the ships were again in line. Then, despite frantic warnings and appeals, he repeated the maneuver, inflicting a new injury upon the American ship but none upon the vessels she was fighting.[1]

For this inexplicable treachery he was brought before the American minister at Paris. Arthur Lee, the dyspeptic, the melancholy, was abroad then as a general commissioner for the United States. He was supposed to outrank the minister, and the case was unhappily referred to him. He made the remarkable decision that as Landais had been commissioned by Congress no other power could deprive

[1] Cooper's Naval History, Vol. I, p. 208. The shots from the *Alliance* are generally believed to have caused the sinking of the *Bon Homme Richard* after her victory.

him of his command, and he was restored to the *Alliance,* in which he sailed for America.

On the way his conduct became so manifestly insane that other officers and the crew locked him below for safety and the ship was brought into port by her lieutenant. When the facts became known, Congress dismissed Landais from the navy, but for the next two or three years he drifted around Philadelphia, talking about the money the United States owed to him. Small was the comfort he had from the Superintendent of Finance. Here was one applicant that without compunction could be rebuffed.

The redoubtable Jones himself came in sometime afterward, and if the two had met we may believe a pretty scene would have enlivened the drab precincts of Finance. Jones brought a letter respecting the prizes he had taken in the *Bon Homme Richard* and the matter of prize money, but even he went away empty-handed from that desolate place.

Sometimes the entries recall stories of the Revolutionary conflict that have in the course of time lapsed from the human memory.

Jan. 4 [*1782*]. The vice consul of France applied for Money to pay three of the French Seamen who had acted as Volunteers on board the *Ariel* and whom I ordered to be paid agreeable to the Act of Congress of the 7th September.

Ariel—she figured in the Paul Jones story. After his victory off Flamborough Head, Jones put into Holland, which was then at peace with England. Being finally ordered thence, he got to France, where he sought means to return to the United States. He

A GLIMPSE OF OLD PHILADELPHIA

had been away three years. The king lent the *Ariel* to take him home. She was an exceedingly small vessel, not much bigger than a sloop. In this Jones started homeward and ran into a terrific storm in which his poor little shallop came near to founder. The *Ariel* rolled so that her lower yard-arms often dipped into the water. To ease her the foremast was cut away, but in a short time the main and mizzen went overboard on their own account. She had with her some of the officers and men that had fought so well on the *Bon Homme Richard.* All these were now likely to be lost with John Paul but by skill and daring she was kept afloat and worked back to France, where she refitted and made another start.

On this second voyage she met at night a British war-ship that she fought and forced to surrender, but when the firing was stopped the Briton made off in the dark. The action was the subject of a historic controversy. Jones said that the vessel he had fought and beaten was the British twenty-gun ship *Triumph.* Other naval men, who might have been jealous of Jones, averred that it was only a privateer and that Jones was to blame for her treacherous escape. It was for this voyage that French sailors, seeing him short-handed, volunteered and were thanked and rewarded by Congress.

The famous author of "Common Sense," and "The Appeal to Reason," was then dwelling in Philadelphia and comes next in the gallery.

Sept. 18 [1781]. Sent for Thos. Paine Esq. author of the Pamphlet called Common Sense and several other Performances and proposed that for the Service of the Country he should write

and publish such Pieces respecting the propriety, necessity and Utility of Taxation as might be likely to promote the Public Service of America, as the Support of the War does and ultimately must rest on the Taxes to be raised in the United States.

He seems not to have written this pamphlet, which was sorely needed, but before long he reappears at the Finance Office.

Jan. 26. In consequence of the information received from Mr. Thomas Paine of the intention of some Officers to promote a general Application by way of Memorial to his Excellency Genl Washington respecting their Pay I sent for him and had a long Conversation on the various matters of a Public Nature; he observed that his Services to the Public had rather been neglected. I told him I could wish his pen to be wielded in aid of such measures as I might be able to convince him were clearly Calculated for the Service of the United States, that I had no views or plans but what were meant for the Public Good, and that I should ask no man's assistance on any other ground; that it was true I had nothing in my power to offer in compensation for his Services but that Something might turn up and that I should have him in mind.

Morris was trying to head off the memorial. Paine had been approached by the dissatisfied officers with the request that he write their document for them, the power of his pen being known and appreciated, and he, like an honest man, had told Morris of this request. But it appears that Morris was unable to prevent the memorial or Paine from the writing of it.[1]

These are the disclosures that make this Diary beyond price for any one with a speculative turn of

[1] *Vide* Diary of February 6, 1782.

mind. Here its showing is that Robert Morris's mental gage must have been wonderfully broad—at times. He "sent for Thos. Paine Esqr." Yet Paine had violently and persistently attacked Morris and that on the point where Morris was touchiest, which was his fidelity to his trust. The information, or alleged information, upon which Paine proceeded he had no doubt drawn from Arthur Lee, compendiously described as one of the best haters in the world.[1] Paine probably took it at face value without sifting it. The use he made of it was scandalous. Few men in public life at that time would have overlooked such assaults. That Morris was able to put the public interests above his personal resentment is a point in his favor his biographers have overlooked.

Odds and ends of tragedies are to be glimpsed in this changeful progression.

September 10. Wrote a letter to His Excellency Genl. Washington in reply to his two of 7th inst. and here I must observe that one of those letters respected a Criminal under Sentence of Death. The Letter came to hand on Saturday 3/4 after 11 o'Clock in the forenoon and as it contained a pardon I instantly sent it by Mr. John Brown Secrety of the Marine department, for Genl St. Clair whom he could not find but calling at the Gaol he was informed the Criminal had been executed the day before.

We come continually upon the fag ends of stories that must have been of great and sometimes of painful interest and are now lost.

[1] Sumner, *Robert Morris*, p. 177.

Jan. 5 [*1782*]. His Excellency the Minister of France and the Honble Mr. Holker both Solicited me to favor Colo Gimat in advancing money to him in part of his pay in greater proportion than I have done to other officers, assigning his Merit, his Wounds and his necessities as the reasons on which he and they grounded this Request. My Answer was that I had every desire to Serve and oblige Colo Gimat, that nothing could be more pleasing than to relieve his necessities but having laid down one rule for paying those officers who not being attached to any particular line of the Army had not received Depreciation I could not deviate from that Rule and therefore ordered him one fifth of his Balance as I had done to the Rest.

By "depreciation" he means that Congress had allowed officers in the army an addition of one-fifth to their regular pay as compensation for the decreased purchasing power of money. As the best State paper was usually at two and a half for one, and Continental dollars at forty for one, the benefaction was nothing to exhilarate, but the poor officers were glad to get even this pittance.

Certain obligations must be met, however.

Jan. 9 [*1782*]. Received a Letter from Mr. Henry Remson Respecting thirteen Galls of Wine which he Supplied to Mr. Peabody and others Committee of Congress at Morris Town and his Son producing an Order to receive the Money I desired Mr. Swanwick to pay the same.

Lafayette came several times to the office and as he was not an applicant for money he must have been welcome. Morris notes that he talked with him about the state of the nation and seems to have found satisfaction in Lafayette's views.

Washington came often in the early part of the

year (1782) to consult about the necessary funds to move the army in the campaign planned for it. Morris suggested, after they had debated many projects, that the best way would be to advertise for bids from contractors for this purpose, and Washington assented. Every Monday night Washington, Morris, the Secretary for Foreign Affairs (Robert Livingston), the Secretary of Congress, Gouverneur Morris and sometimes the Secretary of War (General Lincoln) met at Morris's office to discuss the desperate state of the nation and to try to find a way out of it.

Jan. 5 [*1782*]. Capt. Segird brought the Comptrollers Certificate for the balance of his pay and Depreciation and was very pressing for the whole or as much as possible of the Money alledging that he was this day to depart for Europe with the *Hermione* Frigate, Capt. Le Touche. I paid him the one-fifth as in other Cases and two hours after received an Anonymous letter telling me he was not going to Europe but that this was an Artifice to get Money from me. If this be so it was useless as I should have paid him the same Sum had he not made that pretence, but if it be true that he made a false pretense he does not deserve employment in our Service and this[1] I will enquire into.

If Morris's mind was of the broad gage, so was Salomon's. Perhaps this was another force to bring them together. Morris had it in his power, certainly, to revenge himself on Arthur Lee and never did so; and we have seen that on public business he could talk in the friendliest way to Paine. Salomon's breadth went even farther, to the extent of showing

[1] The word in the manuscript is "his," which is an evident error.

us a man that could give himself to a war and still have only kindly feelings toward unfortunate beings on the other side. It is one of the glories of the American Revolution that British prisoners in American hands were well treated. Even Lecky, the acrid Lecky, admits this, and against the terrible records of The Provost, or such indictments as the diaries of Cornelius and Fox and the admitted brutalities of Cunningham we may well set old Dan Morgan, barbarously mishandled in his youth by a British officer and in the Revolution caring like a nurse for the British prisoners that fell into his hands.

After the surrender of Cornwallis, many British officers and soldiers were segregated at Lancaster, Pennsylvania. The officers had great difficulty to get any money because at that town was no one in a position to cash the bills they drew. Joshua Isaacs of Lancaster was in that line of trade, but he was powerless to help because in the financial snarl in which every one lived, he had nothing that could be called cash, or had it in no sums such as were required. He wrote to Salomon for help and this is the reply he had:

If the bills are drawn by the Paymaster general in favor of any particular officers and endorsed by the Commander-in-chief, or at least by the Commanding officer of a Regiment for a short sight, payable in New York, they will answer. If they are drawn on London it will make no difference, if those answer that are drawn on New York.

If they are drawn in the manner I have pointed out and I experience the Credit that they will have at New York, I shall be able to give you further information respecting them and

if they entirely answer it will lay in my power to furnish cash sufficient to supply the whole army.

If you will remit me some of them, and I find they will answer, I'll advance a small sum on them till I know their fate, which will be shortly after.

There were more than two thousand British prisoners at Lancaster and other cantonments at York and Frederick Town. It will be seen that the task he was so blithely assuming might have been of a considerable size.

Isaacs wrote back that the bills were all right. It is plain from the correspondence that he viewed the affair as mere business and Salomon as a chance to mingle a good deed with profits, which was his idea of life. When he received Isaacs's next letter, assuring him that the bills were genuine, which was the first point in the matter, Salomon responded with this cheerful note:

And draw on me for any Sum by post or express, it shall be honoured at Sight, let the Amount be ever so Great. The Bills may be drawn on New York or London if they are endorsed by their Commanding Officer.

Yours,
Haym Salomon.[1]

But in the way of chronology, we must go back to 1781 and the Finance Office, where the historic figures pass day after day, and each with a brow puckered with troubles.

Nov. 27. This day John Paulding and David Williams, two of the Partie that apprehended Major Andre applied for their Annuity ordered by act of Congress 3rd Novr, 1780.

[1] Salomon's Letter Book, dates of February 4 and 7, 1782.

Congress had allowed these men two hundred dollars a year for life, each, and they had now come to collect it. Morris was eager to pay them, but was afraid they might be frauds, and no one in the place had ever seen them. But Paulding had provided himself with a pass written by the secretary of the Governor of New York. Gouverneur Morris, who was from New York, where his family once owned about half of the Bronx, examined this pass and happened to recognize the handwriting. When Paulding had sworn to his own identity and then identified Williams, Morris gave them warrants for their money —provided by Haym Salomon.

His little friend came in often to see him and confer about the state of finances, but was not in good health. The terrific cold he had taken in the roofless Sugar House had never quite left him. A residue of painful cough sometimes alarmed his friends. Still busy in church affairs as well as national, he had been made one of the trustees of the congregation and was the largest contributor to its expenses.

Almost daily at the impoverished Finance Office somebody drifted in that we should like to know more about.

It appears that when Warren fell at Bunker Hill he left a family of children; and the State of Massachusetts, in gratitude to a brave and good man, had undertaken to educate these and then had forgotten its promise or neglected it. On December 3, there called at Morris's quarters Mr. Lovell, himself a Massachusetts leader, with a bill for the education

of one of these children and a request that it be paid. It may seem strange that a matter belonging entirely to one State should have been viewed as something for the national financier to look after, but there was no line of demarcation between these obligations as there was no national finance—and in effect no nation.

Morris told Lovell that he approved of the appropriation and had some time before given order that the charge be paid. Lovell said it had not been paid and the honor of the State had been shamed thereby. He added that more honors than that of Massachusetts had been impugned of late and that for his own part it was his intention to bestow fifty pounds upon the young men that had discovered Arnold's plot to rob the office of the Secretary of Pennsylvania through his agents, one Moodie and others.

This referred to the time when Arnold had been commandant at Philadelphia and had involved himself in reckless living.

They had other frauds of more recent date to deal with—frauds, for instance, committed by agents in Massachusetts in the purchase of cattle, charging one weight and supplying one far under. Also, a multiplicity of other cares and troubles, but at last one day of good luck.

Dec. 13 [*1781*]. Being fixed by Congress as Thanksgiving day, I came to the Office, performed some writing business & then went in pursuit of Health on the back of a Good Horse.

CHAPTER XI

Sir James Tries His Skill

TWO days later, in South Carolina, the legislature began to discuss a system of taxation to meet the necessities of the national treasury—seven years after the beginning of the war, six years after the Declaration of Independence.

Supposing it to be passed by the legislature, another year, perhaps two years, must elapse before a cent of the harvest therefrom could drift into Morris's busy, empty hands. His portraits reveal the strong underjaw that is supposed to denote tenacity. For once the diagnosis could hardly be wrong. The man's faults otherwise might have been legion. For the patience to hold on in the face of all these delays and of so much incompetence it is impossible to withhold a perplexed admiration.

If time had been his to dally with such things, there would have been other diversions for him than riding on the back of a Good Horse. Unusual characters continued daily to stride across his little stage where pivoted in reality the fate of the American future. Three days before Christmas, in came Colonel Robert Troup representing William Alexander, Earl of Stirling.

At William Alexander it has been customary to

sniff, more or less, some writers assuming that his use of the title was merely bravado and his sympathies with the Revolution, if any, as much under suspicion. Both conclusions are wrong. He spoke by the card about his lineage, if that amounts to anything, and he was of stalwart courage and unusual capacity. He was born in New York City in 1726; his father was that James Alexander whose brave defense of Zenger in the freedom-of-the-press case did so much to defeat a tyrannical government and establish a great principle of the human emancipation, although it cost Alexander his place at the bar. The son was well educated and while still young attracted attention for his mentality and thoroughness. He was in the colonial military service and when the Revolution began took it up wholeheartedly, although it promised utterly to vitiate his claims to the fusty old peerage, if that fact disturbed his repose.

Because he had been trained in the militia, he began with the rank of colonel, won by good service promotion to be brigadier and then major-general, and distinguished himself on many occasions, but particularly at Monmouth, where he commanded the right wing. So far as is now known he must have been the rightful heir to the earldom, but the British government refused to allow the claim. One Alexander Humphreys of Birmingham, England, changed his name to William Alexander, pretended a lineal descent and was recognized, receiving the title and patent. In a short time he was discovered to be a fraud and the title was taken from him. But it

was never conferred upon William Alexander of New York.

Besides being a good soldier, he was a distinguished mathematician, one of the founders of the New York Society Library, a benefactor of Columbia College, and a respected and useful citizen.

Colonel Troup, coming in the name of Alexander, bore a message of warning to the effect that Sir James Jay on the British side was trying to improve upon the counterfeiting that had worked so much mischief to Continental dollars. He was sedulously through his spies spreading the report that the orders on the treasury that Morris was issuing were worthless scraps of paper. These orders had been circulating in the State of New York as cash, there being scarcely any other, and if their credit could be destroyed the American operations there might be seriously disjointed.

I desired Colo Troup to present my compliments to His Lordship with thanks for his well meant information and at the same time I desired Colo Troup to tell his Lordship that Sir James may try his Skill on these Notes and Welcome for their Credit stands on too Solid a foundation to be injured by Sir James's efforts.

The foundation was that they were invariably paid as soon as they were presented at the bank, where Salomon's deposits, the sale of the precious bills, the trading in tobacco and other desperate measures kept the citadel. Morris's reply was no empty boast. With agility and not too much conscience he would side-step the issuing of an order for even the most righteous claim, but once issued it

must be as good as gold. Through all the dreary years he allowed no default on so much as one of his papers.

This year ended without a change in the financial situation. No revenue, no tax levy, only the beginning of the promise of a constituted authority that should be able to move ahead. Clamoring creditors still the rule at the finance bureau—clamoring creditors, petty devices to evade them. Destitution among the officers was growing. The family of General St. Clair fell into a state of such acute want that James Wilson took up their case and pleaded with the turtle-backed Morris. He pointed out that Mrs. St. Clair was a sister of Governor Bowdoin and had all her life been used to gentle ways; also that the general's services had been from the first loyal and continuous.

But I was obliged to refuse, being contrary to a necessary act of Congress. I lament this necessity but cannot avoid it.

The wonder is that in such a state of ruin he ever paid anything to anybody.

On April 18, 1781, the public debt of the United States amounted to $24,057,577 (in specie). The Continental obligations were so madly intorted nobody could give the exact divisions of this debt and their totals. Six million dollars were owed abroad, on which the annual interest charges were $360,000.[1]

[1] Albert S. Bolles, "The Financial Administration of Robert Morris," *Penn Monthly*, October, 1878.

At page 7 he says: "Only small sums flowed into the public treasury. The people were not accustomed to taxes nor had the legislators adopted 'proper modes of laying and levying them with convenience to the people.' " —as expected by Congress.

We may cast ahead a little and record that on January 1, 1783, the public debt had grown to $42,000,375, of which $7,885,088 were owed abroad.

We can hardly withhold the conclusion that men like Morris and Salomon more than ever before held the whole thing in their hands. Yet even Morris groped in the darkness of midnight. He wrote to the President of Congress that "there can no longer be a doubt that our public credit is gone."

Congress had adopted the plan of naming a lump sum as necessary to be raised for the national existence and then apportioning that amount among the States according to their population and wealth. Eight million dollars to be raised were thus apportioned this year of 1782 and less than one-quarter of the amount was secured. New Hampshire was assessed $375,598 and paid $3,000. Massachusetts was assessed $1,307,596 and paid $247,676.66. New York was assessed $373,598 and paid $39,064.01.[1]

As the new year opened, a new activity developed for Salomon in the religious side of his interests. When he came to Philadelphia, the Jews gathered into the small Congregation Mickvé Israel, were worshiping in a rented room in Sterling Alley. It had long been their ardent desire to build a synagogue. This year, through the liberality of Salomon, they were able to see their desire realized. He offered to bear one-fourth of the expense whatever it might be. They bought a lot in Cherry Street near Third, erected their synagogue of brick and dedicated it in September, the first synagogue in Philadelphia.

[1] Bolles, pp. 28-9.

His private profits might have continued to mount in a manner exceedingly fair to see, for there were great opportunities, first in the commission line and then in ship brokerage. The way of the ships in the seas of those days was not uncheckered. Military operations on land were negligible but continued unabated on the water. Hundreds of British naval commanders, not having heard of the collapse of Cornwallis, continued to hunt for American blockade runners as assiduously as ever and sometimes with much success. The rebound in public spirits in America brought about by victory and the dawning hope of freedom caused in turn another trade expansion and greater recklessness. More ships and greater chances sometimes resulted in more disasters. A whole covey of American ships scudding out of the Capes for Southern Europe or the West Indies might be pounced upon before it had gone two hundred miles. Or it might get through in perfect safety, when its profits would be three or four hundred per cent and erase last month's losses.

It was a fascinating game, and the ups and downs of it had curious effects upon the Morris-Salomon partnership operations. When the news came of a disastrous loss at sea, for some days thereafter bills of exchange would drop all but out of sight, the market would stick in the doldrums and the loud plaints of Morris's applicants might sound through vacant halls until Salomon's check or a lucky sale should bring a day's relief.

Troubles of all kinds multiplied upon the head of the unlucky superintendent. General Greene, who

with General Wayne was now holding the enemy tightly cooped up in Charlestown and Savannah, found himself in a position where he should have swift reenforcement lest the mouse escape from the trap.

February 6. His excellency, General Washington, the Hon. Mr. Connell, the Hon. Mr. Jones and the Hon. Mr. Everleigh, a Committee of Congress, came to the office and held a long Conference respecting Letters from the Governor of Virginia and General Greene, the latter requiring reinforcements from the former and Governor Harrison telling Congress they could not grant any. After much conversation, I was asked whether I could supply Money to support Movements of Forces that way, to purchase Cattle, Salt and Rum etc. Very unhappy in the negative which is dictated by poverty and only consoled by the hope and belief that the intelligence on which General Greene demanded Aid is not well founded at any rate we must wait farther advices before any measures are taken.

In person or by proxy the host of great actors on that bustling stage moved in and out of one office door. To no other spot in America come so many figures of compelling interest.

February 21. Lieut. Barny of the Navy is just returned from Captivity in England. He says, etc.

March 5. Lieut. Barney applied respecting Subsistence during the time he was Prisoner, but as I disapproved of his acc^{t} I required another with Particulars.

He means Joshua Barney, the redoubtable, the marvelous, the unparalleled sea hero of all ages and all lands, whose veritable adventures shoot far beyond any fiction—Joshua Barney of the *Hyder Ali* and so many other imperishable memories. It was he that was in full and sole command of a full-rigged

ship at sea when he was only sixteen, he that joined the Revolutionary navy the moment it was projected, that at the age of seventeen in a battle between a Continental schooner and a British brig so distinguished himself that he was promoted from master's mate to a full lieutenancy. Joshua Barney, who in the *Sachem,* when his commander was disabled, took the trumpet and saved the ship. Joshua Barney, four times taken prisoner and at last carried to England for safety and locked up in the vile old Mill Prison. "Just returned from captivity in England," says the Diary, coolly. Well, he had. The British could no more confine that indomitable soul than they could shut off the sunrise. He escaped once from Mill Prison and was recaptured. He escaped a second time, wandered around hostile England in disguise, eluded and outwitted his pursuers, made his way to a seaport, actually got thence to France at a time when England and France were at war and so back to America, where he immediately took command of the *Hyder Ali,* went to sea and smashed up the *General Monk,* a heavier and stronger ship, in one of the greatest sea fights ever known. Joshua Barney—he came in and had to be rebuffed like the rest.

February 12. Colo Tench Tilghman came from his Excellency General Washington with a letter from Colo Armand relative to his recruiting Money and Horses, both of which are Complied with, etc.

Charles Armand Taffin, Marquis de la Rouarie, descendant of an old family of French nobility. In

his youth he had read much in Rousseau and other philosophical insurgents, becoming one of those young French aristocrat-democrats of which Lafayette is the most familiar example. There is no more romantic story than Armand's—romantic and melancholy. He quarreled with his family about his revolutionary beliefs and became an outspoken advocate of a republic in France. Wandering about Paris he fell in love with an actress older than himself. She refused to marry him and in despair, believing his life to be wrecked, he entered the Trappist monastery.

He was there as a novice, planting seeds and culling simples, when he heard of the revolt of the American colonies and saw at last a prospect that his political theories were to be put into practice. He threw off his monkish robe, got passage to America, offered his sword to Congress, was commissioned a colonel and organized and led Armand's Legion, a body of cavalry that did splendid service on many a field. When his regiment was all but destroyed at Camden, he went to France, purchased the outfit for another, brought it to America, presented it to Congress, organized his troop and was in at the finish at Yorktown.

Washington was particularly fond of him; all the American officers adored him for his courage and indomitable good humor. When the war was ended he went back to France and at the outbreak of the Revolution there was a fervent Revolutionist, earning imprisonment from the government. But on the putting to death of Louis XVI his aristocratic in-

stincts revived and he opposed the Jacobins. He started a revolt against them in Brittany, it failed and for months he wandered the country disguised as a beggar. He died in 1793, probably from illness resulting from exposure.

For us on this quest and quarry he has a peculiar interest. We want to know what kind of man this Haym Salomon was, so steadily chivalrous to the ideal the Americans were struggling for. There is a single line in one of his accounts that reveals him better than a chapter of pseudo-psychical analysis and fictional dreams. It reads thus:

Armand's Legion $830.30[1]

It means that when the Marquis de la Rouarie was seeking to replace his shattered troops after the disastrous day of Camden, Haym Salomon helped him. To do this he went out of his way, for Armand was not making a drive nor managing a public subscription. Few persons had a hint of his purpose, and still fewer a chance to share in it. Supposing Salomon to be interested in the Revolution in only a perfunctory way or for the spotlight, he need have given not one cent for the Armand Legion. He must have gone hunting purse in hand for the young Frenchman with the unconquerable spirit; he must have been moved to go by the kind of passionate and consuming fervor that drove Joselowicz along; it must have been just one more deed of conviction without calculation.

[1] In the inventory of his estate. The odd cents in the item mean that the subscription was made in Pennsylvania money, which was still pounds and shillings, and is here translated into dollars.

He was engaged in doing such things. The next line is

Karens' Regiment	$276.30

and the next

Vanheer's Corps	$1,481.33

These, too, were bodies of partizans equipped otherwise than at the public expense, and Salomon, in his quiet, unpretentious way, was their backer. He seems to have told nobody that this was so; he never called attention to his benefactions. In all the discussions of his liberality that came on afterward these items were never mentioned. They have slept nearly one hundred and fifty years in one dusty record in Philadelphia, and yet they are the unimpeachable witnesses to his real character and scatter the last doubt as to the real basis of his reasonings. With all his heart and all his soul he was a Revolutionist. It was not for nothing that he had seen and had his part in the agonies of Poland. He may have felt them too deeply to talk about them.

February 13. Cap. James Nicholson of the Navy applied to have his Accounts settled after some Conversation told him to call tomorrow.

Captain James Nicholson, who fought on land when he could not get to sea to fight, who took part in the battle of Trenton and other engagements, who succeeded Esek Hopkins as chief officer of the navy. At the very outbreak of the war, he had distinguished himself in the command of a small armed

vessel with which he went about recapturing ships the British cruisers had taken. Once he fought two of them at the same time, one on each side, fighting still when it was plain they were too strong for him, and fighting still when he had lost his masts.

There continued to be no end of trouble and delay about the taxes so that Morris had little and uncertain revenue from that source and must live along from hand to mouth on what his bills and his trading could produce for him. He has one entry that illumines the situation, when for almost the only time he makes a long and colorful statement instead of a brief entry.

March 4. This day I went up to the State House, sent for Mr. James McCline from the Assembly Room and informed him I was told he was opposing the laying of Tax to the full Quota of Eight Millions of Dollars called for by Congress [meaning Pennsylvania's share of $8,000,000.] Also I mentioned the Opposition to the Bank, &c. I delineated the consequences of such opposition in the presence of the Honble Colonel Atlee and told him in the plainest terms that if my measures are supported I shall enable the Commander in Chief to open the campaign early and to carry on Offensive War with Vigor, but if on the contrary I am deprived of the Means to fulfil my Engagements the Consequences must be that the Country must again be filled with Commissaries and Quarter Masters to make military collection, &c &c. I also told Mr. McCline that I was informed the House had voted to Supply Genl Irvine the Money to pay the troops at Fort Pitt. I told him the pernicious Consequences of partial payments, that I had already been at much pains to put a stop to them, and that if this measure is executed by the Assembly the door will be again opened to partial payments and be attended with every mischief and inconvenience that was experienced by that practice before. In consequence of this he mentioned the matter in the House and a Committee was ap-

pointed to confer with me on the Subject. I desired his Excellency General Washington to be present. Accordingly we met at this office at 7 oclock when I repeated my Sentiments and the General declared them to be his and after a lengthy Conference the Committee left us and I suppose will report accordingly.

CHAPTER XII

By These Narrow Chances

A GREAT change has become apparent in the attitude of the Diary to the little man from Front Street. At first he was mentioned seldom and casually, as something in the day's work. Now "I sent for Mr. Haym Salomon" and "Mr. Haym Salomon informs me," are the common entries. No more of "the Jew broker." All that has gone with the mention of any other agency. Salomon does it all. It is his sales of bills of exchange that provide the Finance Office with the funds that mainly keep the government in motion. When bills can no longer be sold, he has other ways to help as you shall hear.

This is the extravagant part of the story and one for men in an age of materialism to look at with lifted brows. In these times we are not easily made to believe that when it comes to business, at least, hard-bound, chilled-steel business, men will act persistently from any motive of devotion to a cause. It is too contrary to sophistication and the Worldly-Wiseman view we have learned to take of things and ways below. That a man not a native of the country should thus introduce patriotic romance into commerce and dreamy idealism into accounts, throwing away good money and the chances of making more,

is a little too much. It is still more fantastic when we are asked to believe that this was done by one peculiarly gifted in profit-making and plunged to his neck in trade. Men are not built that way, say we that know, and pass up the whole incident as fable.

Is it fable? A committee of the Senate of the United States, composed of some of its gravest and most responsible members, making a report, once included this statement:[1]

> It is also proven by the original checks and vouchers before your Committee that Haym Salomon advanced in specie to the Superintendent of Finance of the Revolutionary government (Robert Morris), at various times and in various sums to the amount of some $211,678, for which amount the original checks are now before your committee, excepting two or three which are mislaid but are well vouched for and referred to in former reports.

And the cashier of the Bank of North America, in a sworn deposition, says this, after examining the books of the bank for 1782 and 1783:

> Respecting the examination of the deposition of the amounts charged in the undermentioned checks or drafts to the account of Haym Salomon, paid to Robert Morris and to Superintendent of Finance:
>
> August 1, 1782, to Robert Morris, $20,000; August 9, 1782, to ditto, $10,000; August 27, 1783, $20,000; October 8, 1783, $6,000; October 13, 1783, $6,000; October 27, 1783, $3,000; October 30, 1783, $5,000.
>
> The above, with thirty-three other orders, amounting to upwards of one hundred thousand dollars, exclusive of the above, of various dates and amounts, appear all charged as having been paid to Robert Morris, in the day book and ledger of the bank.

[1] Thirty-sixth Congress, First Session, Senate Report No. 127.

Next, into this improbable narrative, comes the Diary of Morris and seems to fit with a curious aptness.

On August 7, 1782, it records a conference with Salomon on the existing state of affairs and another appeal by Morris to sell bills of exchange that there may be funds with which to proceed.

Bills of exchange—they were slow of sale at that time. Robert Morris's optimism had fallen flat. The broker could dispose of nothing. He seems to have tried the next day and tried hard, without success. The next day, August 9, he appears on the ledger as depositing $10,000 in the bank on his own account and making a check to Robert Morris for the same amount. It is paid, there is coin in the treasury, and the poor superintendent must have breathed again.

On August 16 there is again a desperate situation. Morris sends for his faithful friend and, casting about for some measure of relief, thinks of something he can sell.

> I sent for Haym Salomon and delivered him a waggon receipt for twenty dry Hides sent by Geo. Albert Hall, Esqur. from South Carolina and desired him to sell the same to the best advantage of the United States. I also desired Salomon to call on Colo. Miles for a few Casks of Pott Ash or Pearl Ashes which I am informed are in his Stores, being the property of the United States and to sell the Same to the best Advantage.

The result of the sale is not recorded, but plainly the empty treasury knows for a day or two the luxury of the sound of coin. It is soon empty again and again it is relieved by a deposit in the Bank of

North America by Haym Salomon and his handy check to the Superintendent of Finance.

"It is also proven by the original checks and vouchers before your Committee," says the Senate report, "that Haym Salomon advanced in specie . . . $211,678." On the strength of this statement writers, historians and orators have always assumed that what Salomon advanced was money from his own personal funds, being never repaid. In a way, this belief is borne out by the statement of the cashier about the evidence in the bank's day-book and ledger. The bank's day-book has been lost. The ledger is still in existence, but while it shows Salomon's account and the record of his remarkable and almost phenomenal activity, it does not tell us the whole story, nor the part of it that most we want to know.

Salomon was the chief depositor of the new bank. His account in the first ledger occupies fifteen pages and eclipses all others. It shows again and again checks to Morris with deposits against these checks but reveals little about the sources of the deposits. It is impossible to conclude from these showings that the funds Salomon delivered to the superintendent just in time to ward off the smash were funds of his own. Some of them may have been; but what seems to be the fact is that he went forth desperately in the hour of need, rushed a sale of a bill of exchange and so saved the day. Nevertheless, for those determined upon the other opinion, there is that flat-footed statement by the committee. "It is also proven by the original checks and vouchers that

Haym Salomon advanced," and so on. The original checks and vouchers that the committee had before it have long vanished; the day-book is not likely now to be discovered, and the real nature of these particular transactions will probably remain mysterious.

But one thing is made by the Diary as plain as daylight. Haym Salomon is the pivot of the whole business. He stands in the breach; he keeps back the massed attacks that make for bankruptcy; everything depends upon him. It is Haym Salomon this and Haym Salomon that. On some days he makes six or seven visits to consult with the superintendent. Forty times, according to this testimony of the cashier, between August 1, 1782, and the time Morris goes out of office, Haym Salomon comes to bat with his timely check. No matter where he gets the money: he gets it and it is this money that saves the day.

He sells bills when no one else can sell them. More than that; he sells without gouging, without profit, even. Other brokers continue to harass the superintendent by underselling the market and hampering the sale of his bills. He has no trouble from Salomon. John Chaloner comes into the picture again; the man that Morris rebuked for this practice and that promised amendment. He is as bad as ever, and on September 30, 1782, Morris bribes him with $20,000 taken from his scanty stores to stop underselling and give the government a chance. From this one fact we can judge how grave was the crisis. Also, not long after to a broker named Jones $2,000 for the same

purpose.[1] These were Americans. Salomon, the alien born, the refugee from the purlieus of Europe, the immigrant—no bribes, no douceurs for him. He keeps up the price and sells the bills; and forty times he comes in with his blessed check, whether his own money or another's.

One other great service he performs though to this day no one has noticed it, nor given the slightest credit for it. With a magnificent disregard of his own interests, he endorses the paper of the broken-backed government. No one else will do this. The government's credit has ebbed and ebbed until it has sunk from sight. Everybody knows it is gone; sagacious men believe it will never return. Salomon endorses its paper and its officers' paper and its Allies' paper, and makes himself personally liable for all. We have the evidence; no need for speculation or surmise.

John Holker was and had long been the consul-general of France at Philadelphia. He was an earnest friend of America and ably served the American cause. His papers were lately acquired by the United States and are now in the Library of Congress. Among them is a bill of exchange dated May 6, 1784, of Daniel Parker, payable after sixty days, drawn on John Holker and endorsed by Salomon.

Also, two promissory notes, each for $12,000, drawn by Holker, one in December, 1783, and the other in January, 1784, endorsed by Salomon.

Also, there were before a committee of the national

[1] Thirty-sixth Congress, First Session, Senate Report No. 127; also Fifty-second Congress, Second Session, House of Representatives Report No. 2556.

Senate as late as 1860 six promissory notes made by Haym Salomon to Michael Hillegas, the Continental Treasurer, totaling $92,600, and the receipts for these, signed by Hillegas, show that the money was for the use of the United States.

Also there was exhibited to the committee a promissory note for $20,000 made by Salomon to Morris, "which," says the committee's report, "shows by the bank marks upon it that it was discounted by the bank and paid by Mr. Salomon at maturity, whose name is erased and Robert Morris still upon it."

It was by this practice that, despite his thrift and great and profitable business transactions, he accumulated at the bank what was for that time a heavy indebtedness and brought down upon his house, as we are to see, an irretrievable disaster.

We can even perceive the steps of his decline, and estimate what it cost him to stand by. In the "Independent Gazette" of Philadelphia, April 19, 1783, appears this advertisement of gloomy significance:

HAYM SALOMON

Takes this method to acquaint all those who possess full Sets of Bills of Exchange, drawn in his favor and endorsed by him on Monsieur Boutin, Treasurer of the Marine Department of France, that they shall, on application, have the money refunded; and for bills of the above description which may have already been sent to France, satisfactory assurances will be given to the proprietors that they shall be paid, agreeable to their relative tenors, in Paris, April 19.

The same advertisement appeared in the "Packet," another Philadelphia journal, and was repeated

April 26, in the "Independent Gazette." It seems to indicate plainly enough what it meant to him to endorse these notes and bills and why his fortune was dwindling.

So here again in the teeth of all skepticism we are forced to one conclusion about this man. Nothing else will account for him. The same impulse that drove him to take up with the discredited MacDougalls and Searses in New York, and to teach Hessians how to desert, led him into these most unbusinesslike gyrations. It was all one story, MacDougall in jail, Pulaski at Savannah, Armand at Saratoga, Haym Salomon with his endorsements. There is a spirit in men, or in some men, that flames up at any injustice, and out of that has come all the progress we have made. From the hanging of Leisler to the last of the $211,678 checked out by Haym Salomon to Robert Morris and the last endorsed note that Salomon must pay—it looks like just one story, handed along from soul to soul, one doing his part today, whatever it might be, and then another doing his tomorrow; and but for such souls the race would still be enslaved.

We noted when we had the Armand Legion subscription to deal with that this man did not talk about his contribution to that gallant warrior. I think it must have been a habit imbedded in his character. Here again, so far as we can discover now, he told no one about all this money dug out of his resources or of his ingenuity and delivered to the government. He was not a talking man; he did not boast. Sometimes when he was hard pressed he seems to have appealed to his fellow Jews but he did not

solace himself with horn blowing over his own great doings.

One reference there is to the depreciated government securities that he had taken on a long shot in his peculiar ministrations, and one only, a sentence in a letter he wrote to his confidential man, McCrae; but that is all.

He could hardly have told even his wife, or when his estate came to be settled she, being one of the administrators, would have moved to secure certain repayments that will soon become obvious in this story. He could never have told the members of Congress or they, or some of them, would have moved similarly or made some sign in his direction. He seems to have sought from Morris no thanks and from the government no recognition. Some of the facts about the money he supplied and his inexhaustible benevolence are indisputable. Yet in an age when the limelight was a favorite illumination he seems to have cared not a straw for it, and despite all incredulity at such a spectacle there is once more no escape and we must own to a *rara avis*. The glimpse we have had of a serious, silent, restless, indomitable personality, wholly devoted to a cause and bringing to it an extraordinary capacity for self-effacement must be the picture of the real man.

Possibly it was this way of doing things and keeping still about them that bound him so closely to Morris. For all the eloquent pen he wielded on the State governors[1] and others, this same Robert Morris had himself an excellent gift of silence.

[1] There are preserved from him thirty-eight circular letters that he wrote to the governors of States, urging them to further taxation laws and to be diligent in patriotism.

He does not mention in his Diary the sums he received from Salomon and this is in accordance with his usual practice. He does not mention the sums he received from his old associates in business, whom he bled to the limit, from the remnant of his private fortune, from the straining of his credit until it snapped. Only twice in his Diary does he refer to the fact that he ever had any credit and then only indirectly. He does not even relate or hint at the incident by which his name becomes familiar to schoolboys, the incident of the Quaker that met him in the street when he was in a state of deepest dejection and, learning the cause, snatched him from the beetling edge of despair by contributing $50,000. He does not mention what money he received from the linen he unearthed in Connecticut, from his venture in selling tobacco, from the "Indico," from the dry hides and the "Pott Ash or Pearl Ashes" he sold through Salomon. About all these things we are left to surmise a happy result, but Robert Morris, he tells us nothing.

Pen in hand he was no less the Sphinx; his letters are equally reticent about such matters. Only one comment of his gives us the clue of this mystery that he should day after day record his troubles but never the means by which he was rescued from them. "It is a misfortune," said he, "that secrecy should be necessary in the support of the public credit."

He had learned in business the lessons of caution and silence; Salomon must have been tutored to them in his experience as a conspirator for liberty in Poland, and if all accounts are true it was a school

calculated to enforce wariness. In New York, too, he had been through experiences and adventures of a kind to make him conspicuous even in those hot wild times, but it appears that he never mentioned them. With justice he might have claimed attention and applause by his narrow escape from Cunningham's midnight executioners and his subsequent wanderings and adventures. We may doubt if even Morris, who came to know him so well and depend upon him so absolutely, was fully aware of these episodes. It is only a guess and may be footless; but in his Diary he speaks again and again of men that had passed through much less trying emergencies.

It is, of course, conceivable that Salomon told Morris, or another, something of that deadly struggle in Poland that must have been so strong in his recollections, but there is no evidence that he did; and from what else we know of his traits he seems so solitary and so far from autobiography that he probably carried all these reminiscences, too, into the silence. But what stories he might have told if he had been so minded! And it is when we put the evidences of his unmixed devotion against the extravagant egotism of men like Charles Lee and Horatio Gates that we see of what unusual stuff this Polish Jew must have been made. The Arthur St. Clairs and that order came to the Superintendent of Finance mourning about their unpaid salaries and the injustice with which they had been treated. If we may accept the Diary, which is an excellent witness, Salomon did not complain but when the tide was lowest in the national treasury went out and

raised another $50,000 to enable it to meet its creditors. He did not complain, but he provided complainers like St. Clair with the means with which their mouths were stopped.

The solidity of his own position seemed for a long time most remarkable. I do not see how it is possible to doubt that he was a financial genius of the first order. Throughout all these stormy months when every few days his timely check saved the situation for Morris he maintained his own credit at the bank. It was a happy circumstance. If that credit had been lost no one can see how Morris could have survived. The bank books examined by the Senate Committee show that whenever the Salomon account was depleted by a check to Morris it was diligently restored, perhaps by a successful business operation, perhaps by a sale of the everlasting bills of exchange.

The following are his balances as shown to the committee by the bank's ledger:

February 1, 1782	$23,253.00
April 23, 1782	32,233.00
June 26, 1782	46,569.00
August 14, 1782	18,238.64
May 2, 1783	14,144.35
July 1, 1783	11,005.62
August 25, 1783	14,854.27
March 31, 1784	26,743.74

Morris's account was continually overdrawn. At one time he was found to have borrowed directly from the bank a total amount equal to its entire capital.[1] It is no wonder that the directors finally barred

[1] Thirty-sixth Congress, First Session, Senate Report No. 127.

him from their doors. According to a statement made to a committee of the Senate there passed through his hands $8,174,131 of which more than $2,000,000 resulted from his commercial and other outside transactions, so that probably about $6,000,000 was extracted from the sale of bills of exchange and from the States, and this only by hard work and at intervals that left the superintendent in despair. Surely there was never another government financed like this. As to his overdrafts we may take one satisfying look at the statement of them at different times as made up from his final settlement with the Treasury Board:

1782.	June 30	$ 20,613.26
	September 30	218,640.41
	December 31	380,360.21
1783.	March 31	577,630.87
	June 30	826,614.69
	September 30	602,161.21
	December 31	203,002.42
1784.	March 31	183,670.27
	June 30	118,343.24

But while the Diary will never fill in the statistics of the situation, it is the unequaled, eloquent, always convincing witness to the appalling outlines. On every page we may wish the Diarist had been more explicit about the persons with whom he dealt but he could not show us more about the facts. One of the men with whom he had to do was General Benjamin Lincoln, then Secretary of War, the man that received the sword of Cornwallis at Yorktown, one of the unusual and most significant figures of the times.

A student turned fighter, a literary man, fond of quiet, of reading and leisure, he had been called by the Revolution from his seclusion at Hingham, Massachusetts, had shown his capacity in January, 1776, by organizing an expedition that drove the British ships out of Boston harbor and had thereafter been one of Washington's most trusted generals and, in effect, chief of staff. He was second in command at Saratoga and in the fighting of October 8 received a wound that lamed him for life. It did not quench his spirit. He defended Charleston in February and March, 1780, and was made a prisoner there but exchanged. It was he that put down the Shay Rebellion in 1787.

June 25th. Genl Lincoln was at the Office twice this Day for considerable length of time on several points. 1st, respecting Mr. Sands and Co contractors. I told him the letters written to them yesterday, which he thinks quite sufficient on the subject. He asked if extra pay could be actually granted and paid to Officers of the line acting as Commissioners of Prisoners I gave my opinion against partial payments and so suppose such advance will be Considered in that light by the Army. He wanted Money for the Contingent Expenses of the War Office. I signed a Warrant for fifty Dollars to Mr. Carlton for that purpose. He asked if Baron Steuben could draw money for the Contingent Expenses of his Department as Inspector. I gave my opinion in favor thereof as he cannot execute his Office without it.

Fifty dollars for the contingent expenses of the War Department—not in Lilliput; in the United States of America. But it appears from page after page of this doleful record that Lincoln was in marvelous good fortune to obtain even so much.

CHAPTER XIII

"I Sent For Haym Salomon"

THE vagaries of criticism, as revealed in history, seem beyond a merely mortal understanding. Some men, important public men, moving in exposed positions slip through life without being hit with a single bolt, even when they richly have earned a quiverful, and other men go along like Saint Sebastian stuck full of arrows. The anomaly persists and must have puzzled the least observant.

Morris was one of the band that continually draw attack. Not to mention the ever present and ever verjuiced Lees, his appointment as superintendent had been bitterly opposed on the ground that he had not favored the Declaration and therefore was not in heart and soul a true Revolutionist. In office he was repeatedly accused, on not a shred of evidence, of laboring to swell his own purse. Once he had to defend himself against a preposterous charge that he was speculating in defunct Continental dollars. He had stripped himself bare of private fortune and then of credit that he might get the battered ship into port, and his reward was unceasing calumny.

Just at the opening of this season, it was particularly virulent. He must have been of the heroic order to have kept his poise in the midst of such a full-bodied campaign of detraction.

Feb. 23. The Honble Mr. Jos. Jones came here with a Letter from the Governor of Virginia respecting several matters which he wishes to be done by the Continent [Continental government] in that State and I cannot help remarking that the terms of this Letter are very improper as they contain either pointedly or by insinuation a Charge of partiality in my Administration of the Public Moneys for which I am perfectly Conscious there is not the least foundation and altho I shall most Chearfully and cordially render to Virginia every Service I can consistently with my Duty yet I shall do justice to my own Conduct and Character.

But Haym Salomon was his mainstay. Haym Salomon went his way serenely, prospering at his business and still using his prosperity to float the superintendent over reef after reef. The advantages of a man that really understood business on a large scale and knew how to conduct it were in that time and region incalculable. Salomon's brokerage office in Front Street was the real financial plexus of the battle. He handled and forwarded merchandise of every staple sort, his storage warehouses continued to serve the cause, through his hands poured all the money for the French army and establishment, he was banker and broker, he kept the channel of exchange flowing, he knew how a man in Lancaster that had sold flour for Amsterdam could get his return for his produce. But above everything else he knew how the distraught Superintendent of Finance could be supplied with sums of money, veritable money, when he needed them most.

The year had opened, or come near to open with news of an auspicious event that must have made Salomon smile. On January 15, 1782, His Excellency, the Min-

ister of France, Count de la Luzerne, entered the office of the Superintendent of Finance and confided to him and to Mr. Gouverneur Morris the stupendous fact that there was now a Dauphin of France. There was. Heaven in its mercy had seen fit to grant a son and heir to His Most Christian Majesty, thus prolonging for the devoted ally of America the promise of a long line of exalted rulers. With fitting felicitations the two Morrises responded to these glad tidings of great joy. "He also informed us," says the Diary, dryly, "of the arrival of a Frigate into the Chesapeake with money for the French Army, which is also a pleasing Circumstance," and, if we may judge of the distractions of the poor hunted superintendent, far outweighed the other.

But the event momentous must have other and more emphatic celebration and it is odd now to think to what purposes some of Haym Salomon's carefully garnered funds went forth.

May 13. Mr. Hodgedon for money to pay for fireworks ordered by Congress on the Annunciation of the Birth of the Dauphin of France for which I granted him a warrant agreeable to an Estimate approved by General Lincoln.

This day the Chevalier de La Luzerne Minister of France had a public audience of Congress when he announced the Birth of a Dauphin of France, I attended at this Ceremony being admitted into the Congress Halls within the Bar and I took my place next to the Members of Congress sitting on the left of the President the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of War next to me, we were standing during the whole Ceremony as well also the President and Council of the States of Pennsylvania when this Ceremony ended Mr. Livingston, General Lincoln, Mr. G. Morris and myself went to his Excellency the minister of France

to pay our Compliments, afterward we repaired to the City Tavern to an entertainment ordered by Congress, thence to an Exhibition of Fireworks at the State house and then to an entertainment given by the Secry of Foreign Affairs.

Thus was the son and heir of Louis XVI, that excellent locksmith, hailed with eclat three thousand miles away upon his appearance in the ancient house of the Bourbons. No forecast shadow clouded the royal advent; all was well with the world. Not a soul that gazed that night at the fireworks in Philadelphia could have been made to believe by prophecy or by oracle that he was applauding the first act in a drama so tragic and mysterious. The son of Louis whose birth was here celebrated lived only eight years. His younger brother Charles then became dauphin.

A strange reflection belongs to the place where grateful America signaled its joy over the happy event in the royal household. It was the State House in Philadelphia and in it six years before had been loosed the power that wedge in hand was already standing by to overturn that dauphin's regal tribe.

Meantime, the superintendent and the broker genius of Front Street had been cementing their partnership and evading defeat. Almost every day Haym Salomon was in Robert Morris's office, anxiously conferring about the outlook and devising means to tide over a crisis. The main thing was to sell bills of exchange and get the proceeds but not to sell them at a discount nor at a price that would break the market. There would be other bills to be sold tomorrow and the next day, and the superin-

tendent must think of the troubles to come as well as of those that weighed him down today.

The market for bills swayed up and down in accordance with the activities of British cruisers and the success with which Yankee skippers got past the barrage. When they were lucky or skilful, exchange was in demand and when they were trapped, down went the market with the fall of confidence. Although the British land operations had ceased for the lack of enough of an army to motion with, the blockade was redoubled in vigor. It was a hazardous game, but in general the price of bills tended to rise and was now much above the gloomy levels to which the superintendent had faced when he took office.

March 19. Mr. H. Salomon the Broker came to negotiate about Bills I desired to know the Terms on which he can sell and encouraged him to think I shall draw.

Other unfortunates might come and go but Baron von Steuben and his uniform and his money troubles were always at hand if by any chance the outlook seemed to promise better weather. Sometimes the excellent worthy baron came alone and sometimes under eminent ægis, but in any case the burden of his plaint was always the same. He was inspector-general and how could he inspect when he hadn't a uniform fit to be seen in? How? Would some one please tell him that? Not the superintendent, certainly. He could for a long time do no more than make mournful entries about this daily apparition, but at last there is coin in the cash drawer and the emergency is for the moment relieved, as thus:

Mar. 20th. Baron Steuben applied to me with Genl Washington's Letter for Pay &c and the absolute necessity of Supplying this Gentleman in order to enable him to do his duty appears so Strong that I am Compelled to advance Money for the use of this Department.

And then back to the Right Hand and chief reliance:

March 25. Mr. Haym Salomon the Broker came to inform me that Bills of Exchange would be wanted this Week, my necessities will Compel me to draw and indeed I had already agreed last Week with Mr. La Caze and Mallet to Supply them with Bills for 100,000 livres at 6/9d cash down for five Livres and as I shall want Money for the opening of the Campaign I have given Salomon leave to make Sale of 400,000 livres to be drawn at 180 days sight and the Purchasers to give notes payable at 60 days so that they may be discounted at the Bank price on these Conditions 7/ for five livres.

Such terms as 6 shillings and 9 pence cash for bills and 7 shillings on time sales would have seemed an impossible dream six months before when Washington was maneuvering to daze Sir Henry Clinton.

April 8. Haym Salomon Called this day to inform me some circumstance relative to Bills of Exchange. I told him I would sell some Bills, &c

But the skies do not always smile thus.

May 8. This morning I sent for Mr. Haym Salomon. He came and informs me that the interruption to our commerce and the losses of the merchants of this city has so disspirited the Purchasers of Bills of Exchange that he cannot make Sale at any Price.

But before long all the purposed military movements for that year were suspended because there appeared plain evidences that the British intended to give up the struggle and let the Americans have their own way about independence. In March the administration of Lord North, which had waged the unsuccessful war, came to an end and the new ministry began quiet overtures for peace. It sent Richard Oswald to Paris to confer with Benjamin Franklin and after that all men knew that the end had come. The British at New York ceased to make hostile demonstrations and the American and French maintained a bloodless siege. Yet there remained unabated the same necessity to keep the army together, and the brunt of this task still fell upon an empty treasury and a harassed treasurer.

Salomon to the rescue then, always Salomon. The multiplying entries in the Diary are in themselves an interesting study.

June 25. Mr. Haym Salomon came to inform me that he can buy Bills at 6/ five Livres or perhaps 5/9d.

July 1st. Haym Salomon the Broker informs me that he is applied to by Sundry Persons to sell Bills, I desired him to procure me Customers at 6/3d a Doll of 5 Livs.

June [should be July] *3.* Mons Lotbinier applied for his salary, I am doubtful of the propriety of paying, although I suppose the poor old Gent cannot exist without it. Must search the Journals of Congress.

July 2. Haym Salomon proposed to me the Sale of Bills for Lrs. 40,000 at 6/3d for Lrs 5 to be paid for as follows on the 11th July for Lrs 10,000, on the 16th July Lrs, 15,000 on the 1st August Lrs. 15,000.

July 3. Mr. H. Salomon sold several Bills at 6/3d for five Livres, which I signed.

July 10. Haym Salomon respecting Bills. I authorised him to sell Bills payable on the first of August to answer Mr. Pierce's note.

July 12. Haym Salomon came respecting Bills, &c. This Broker has been useful to the public Interest and requests leave to Publish himself as Broker to the Office to which I have consented as I do not see that any disadvantage can possibly arise to the public service but the Reverse and he expects individual Benefits therefrom.

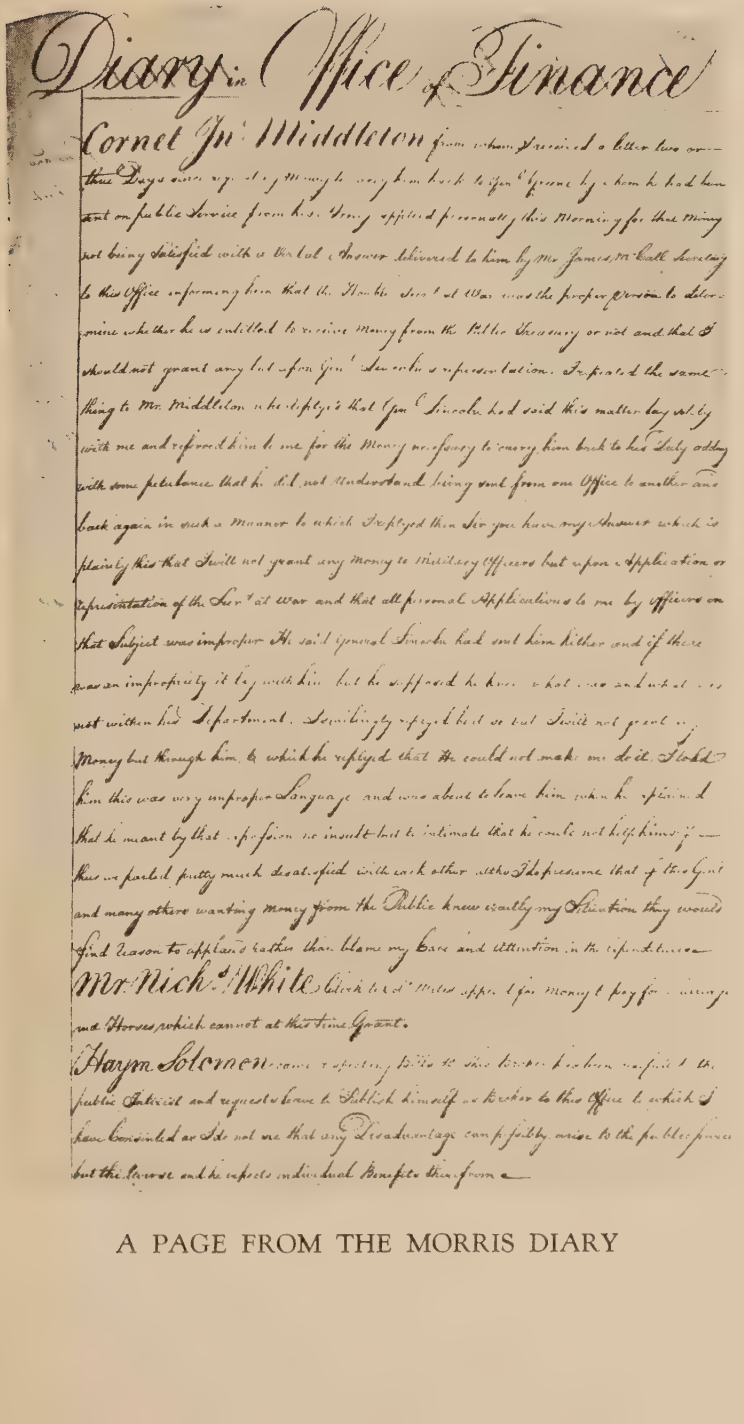
The permission was already old and so was the appointment. For many months Salomon had been Official Broker to the Office of Finance and had been known by that title. This is proved in other ways but conclusively by the fact that on March 6 of that year, four months before the entry in the Diary, appeared in the "Freeman's Journal" of Philadelphia the following advertisement:

HAYM SALOMON

Broker to the Office of Finance, to the Consul General of France and to the Treasurer of the French Army.

At his office in Front Street between Market and Arch Streets.

Buys and sells on Commission, Bank Stock, Bills of Exchange on France, Spain, Holland and other parts of Europe, the West Indies and inland bills, at the usual commissions. He buys & sells Loan Office Certificates, Continental and State Money of this or any other state, paymaster and quartermaster general's notes; these and every other kind of paper transactions (bills of exchange excepted) he will charge his employers no more than One Half Per Cent for his commission.



Diary in Office of Finance

Cornet Jn° Middleton from whom I received a letter two or three Days since respecting Money to carry him back to Genl Greene by whom he had been sent on public Service from his Army applied personally this Morning for that Money not being satisfied with a verbal Answer delivered to him by Mr James, Mr Hall desiring to this Office informing him that the Hon^ble Sec^y at War was the proper person to determine whether he is entitled to receive Money from the Public Treasury or not and that I should not grant any but upon Gen^l Greene's representation. I repeated the same thing to Mr Middleton in the Office's that Gen^l Lincoln had paid this matter lay at by with me and referred him to me for the Money necessary to carry him back to his Duty adding with some petulance that he did not understand being sent from one Office to another and back again in such a Manner to which I replyed then Sir you know my Answer which is plainly this that I will not grant any Money to Military Officers but upon Application or Representation of the Sec^y at War and that all personal Applications to me by Officers on that Subject was improper. He said General Lincoln had sent him hither and if there was an impropriety it lay with him but he supposed he knew what was and what was not within his Department. I smilingly replyed but as that I will not grant any Money but through him to which he replyed that he could not make me do it. I told him this was very unproper Language and was about to leave him when he explained that he meant by that expression no insult but to intimate that he could not help himself. Thus we parted pretty much dissatisfied with each other. Mr Lee presumes that if this Genl and many others wanting Money from the Public knew exactly my Situation they would find Reason to applaud rather than blame my Care and Attention in the Department.

Mr Nich^s White Clerk to Col^o Miles applies for Money to pay for Forage and Horses which cannot at this time Grant.

Haym Solomon came respecting Bills to the Amount he has purchased for public Interest and requests to have to Publish himself as Broker to this Office to which I have Consented as I do not see that any Disadvantage can possibly arise to the public from but the Reverse and he expects individual Benefits therefrom.

A PAGE FROM THE MORRIS DIARY

He procures Money on Loan for a short time and gets notes and bills discounted.

Gentlemen and others residing in this State or any of the United States, by sending their orders to the office, may depend on having their business transacted with as much fidelity and expedition as if they were themselves present.

He receives tobacco, sugars, tea and every other sort of goods to sell on commission for which purpose he has provided proper stores.

He flatters himself his assiduity punctuality and extensive connections in his business as a broker is well established in various parts of Europe and in the United States in particular.

All persons who shall please to favour him with their business may depend upon his utmost exertion for their interest and part of the Money Advanced if desired.

The few letters of his that have been preserved show the man as he was in his impulses. From them, for example, we learn how strong in him were family ties, as they usually are with persons of his faith.

For years he had heard nothing about his father and mother in Poland. The state of that country was not such as to cheer the patriotic Pole or comfort one having relatives there. The second partition had come on, the ruin was complete, and all the sacrifices and heroism of the men of the Berko Joselowicz type could not save it. Communication was extremely difficult. In 1781 Salomon, not having in many months had the least news of his relatives, sent to Gumple Samson, a Jewish merchant and trader at Amsterdam, a bill of exchange for five hundred guilders and asked him to go or send to Poland, ascertain the state

of the Salomon family and give them the money. More than a year passed, and no word came in response to this appeal. He must have been greatly perplexed and worried. In those days there was no international postal service, organized and articulated like ours; letters took their chances, which were many. One of Salomon's close friends was Eleazer Levy of Baltimore, who also had connections abroad. Salomon consulted Levy about the lack of news from Poland, and January 9, 1783, Levy wrote to some one whose name has been lost, some one in Amsterdam, apparently, enclosing two letters from Salomon and asking that they be put directly into Samson's hands. Mr. Levy then proceeds to give us a few character touches about his friend Salomon:

> Some considerable time since, Mr. Salomon, reflecting on the Circumstances of his family in Poland, which when he left many years ago consisted of a Father, Mother, Brothers and Sisters, from whom he has not heard, thinking it his duty now as it is in his Power to afford them assistance he upward of a year ago remitted a bill on Amsterdam for Five hundred Guilders to Mr. Gumple Samson with directions where his relatives lived and how Mr. Samson was to dispose of the money among them. Tho many opportunities have offered and vessels arrived from Amsterdam Mr. Samson has not answered Mr. Salomon's Letter or in any manner acknowledged his receipt of the money remitted, tho the house on which the bill was drawn advise the bill was presented and the money paid by them to Mr. Samson. . . .
>
> Thus having related the Circumstances, you will judge of Mr. Salomon's anxiety to hear of his parents and his ardent wish to relieve them, for could he once know Mr. Samson was not inclined to trouble himself with this Charitable tho unprofitable commission Mr. Salomon would immediately use his utmost

endeavors with some other people and remit another bill.—I need not enlarge farther on this matter. Your own feelings will direct you what is necessary in order to accomplish relief to these poor relatives of Mr. Salomon, whose blessing must follow every individual that in any Shape is instrumental therein.

I am
with true Regard
Your affect friend
Eleazer Levy.

Mr. Levy's correspondent must have started the wheels to revolve, for in April there came to Salomon four letters from his relatives and he writes to his friend Isaac Myers in New York:

I take the Liberty of sending you by Mr. Eleazer Levy Sundry letters Rec'd from my Parents which I have to beg you to answer in the Best Manner you can and according to the Directions that Mr. Levy will give you.—I dare say you will partake with me of the Joy that I feel in receiving these letters so long wished for and in relieving their necessity. By you [I] will answer the four letters & also please to write duplicates of each, which in so doing you will confer an obligation.

Your very ob't Serv't
H. S.

He adds this postscript:

Please to mention to my father the difficulties that I have labored under in not having any learning, and that I should not have known what to have done had it not been for the languages that I learned in my travels, such as French, English, etc.

He means this as no reproach but as an exhortation, for he goes on to say:

Therefore I would advise him and all my relatives to have their children well educated, particularly in the Christian languages and should any of my brothers' children have a good head to learn Hebrew [I] would contribute toward their being instructed.

The fame of his success or of his benevolence or both must have reached Poland and produced demands upon him that he thought unwarranted, for he wrote to an uncle [1] there:

Your ideas of my riches are too extensive. Rich I am not, but the little I have I think it my duty to share with my poor father and mother, for they are the First to be provided for by me and must and shall have the Preference. Whatever little more I can squeeze out I will give my relatives but I tell you plainly and truly that it is not in my power to give you or any relative yearly Allowances. Don't you or any of them expect it—don't fill your mind with vain expectations and golden Dreams that can never be accomplished. I have three young children and as my wife is very young may have more, and if you and the rest of my relatives will consider things with reason they will be sensible of this I now write. But notwithstanding this, I mean to assist my relatives as far as lies in my Power.

"Rich I am not," and the reason will appear later. He writes many letters on many subjects, but though he is sometimes dealing with debtors and sometimes with intractable rustics, he writes always in the same manner of kindly courtesy. He learns that one of his correspondents, not a Jew, has had a wedding in his house. He writes to congratulate

[1] The name has been cut from the page of the letter book, but the name given in the order for six guineas is Joseph Elis. The letter is signed:

"I am with true Respect
Dear Uncle
Your Affect'te Nephew"

It is dated Philadelphia, July 10, 1783.

father and mother and also the happy bridal pair, and in a simple homely way, sends his best wishes and his wife's.

A correspondent has a son that he looks to educate. Send him here, says Salomon, and it will be a pleasure to us to forward him and care for him in every way. A consignment of beeswax will not sell for as much as had been hoped. He earnestly deplores the fact. As to the deerskins, he hopes for the best.

He is modest about himself, and yet not too modest; he thinks that after all he may have some redeeming traits. Writing June 24, 1783, to "Mr. John Strettell, Mer't, London," he says:

> I am to acquaint you that I do not profess Mercantile abilities and therefore the punctuality and Precision Requisite in that Line cannot be complied with on my part.

He has mentioned his purpose to make a shipment of ginseng to Mr. Strettell, and apparently wishes him to be forewarned against inadvertent errors. Then he goes on:

> I mentioned my commencing a small establishment with your house to Mr. Cad. Morris. It appeared satisfactory to him, and he will mention me to you in the Course of his correspondence. My business is a broker and chiefly in bills of Exchange and so very extensive that I am generally known to the Mercantile part of North America.

If he is in the main serious, no one can call him melancholy, for he sometimes attempts even *joco-serie,* though with no notable success.

Philadelphia, 20 June, 1783

Mr. Bart M. Spitzer
Charlestown,
South Carolina.

Sir:

I am surprised after the many assurances that you gave of writing to me that you have not done it. However, will admit this as an Excuse that your whole time is devoted to the Ladys and can't spare time to inform a friend of your welfare, however desirous he may be of hearing.—I doubt if the Ladys here have the same reason to complain of your neglect. Am certain you would not make it long before your return were you to know how desirous the Ladys are of your presence and one in particular who wishes that no pecuniary views may get the better of the partiality you always entertained for her. Time will not permit me to enlarge but be assured that you may command anything that is in the power of your

Obe't Servant

To Mr. Joseph Haines, in Rockingham County, Virginia, he writes a letter on business and then seems stricken with remorse that it is so lacking in cheer, for he adds this:

P.S. I hope you'll excuse my writing so short a letter as a Multiplicity of Business hardly gives me time to think what I am doing, though nothing shall ever induce me to forget my friends. Please to allow Capt. Craven the 14 Dollars. I would not give him the trouble of Swearing to it. His word is Sufficient. As to Capt. Thurston shall leave that matter entirely to your direction. I am sorry you had so much trouble.

Yours

Haym Salomon.

It is not exactly the kind of letter one would expect to have from a gold-digging broker and brokers were not supposed to be anything else.

But coming back to the Diary entries, they are sketching now a lively time in the old Finance Office.

July 15. Mr. Haym Salomon called several times this day respecting Bills of Exchange he being very apprehensive and with pretty good reason that the Price must fall.

July 17. Haym Salomon called often as several consultations respecting Exchange were necessary.

July 22. Haym Salomon several times with me respecting Exchange &c.

July 26. Haym Salomon respecting Exchange my anxiety to provide for the regular discharge of the Paymaster General' Notes which fall due the first of August occasions very frequent Consultations on this Subject because I wish to preserve the Exchange tho I am in great want of the Money. On the same subject I have many consultations with Mr. Swanwick and indeed my time is principally Consumed in forming Contrivances to pay some Debts and to parry the payment of what I cannot accomplish.

He is of varied employments, Haym Salomon. I have spoken of the certain evidences of his unusual gifts for business. He seems to have had also a rather astonishing lack of the steel-trap in his mental make-up. He was susceptible to appeals from friends, real or pretended. There is a man, de Brassine, the providore or intendant of the French hospital that Salomon knows and likes. This man has now come to him with a proposal to buy on time a bunch of the eternal bills of exchange—on time, observe. On July 29 he takes the proposal to Morris, who is not susceptible, who is all cold business, who is Scotch, who is a Yankee trader. Morris demurs. He is against sell-

ing on time except to brokers or responsible dealers. Salomon says he knows de Brassine and has always found him prompt, honest and upright. On this representation, the superintendent, after some debate, agrees to supply the bills, and Salomon goes away not suspecting the trouble he has made for himself by being too good-natured.

August 7th. Haym Salomon Broker respecting Bills, money, &c. I Authorized him to sell Bills for 6/3d cash and on Credit at 6/6.

As we noted when we dealt with the mystery of the Salomon notes, there were times when he himself was without funds and the harassed superintendent went about like one distracted.

Aug. 26. Haym Salomon informs me that there is no Sale for Bills of Exchange nor can he raise any money for me.

Aug. 27. I sent for Salomon and desired him to try every way to raise money and then went in quest of it myself.

Aug. 28. Salomon the Broker came and I urged him to leave no stone unturned to find out Money—or the means by which I can obtain it.

Sept. 5th. I sent for Mr. Haym Salomon to consult respecting the sale of Bills, and find the French Agents continue to undersell me therefore must wait.

Sept. 24th. Haym Salomon Brought several notes taken for Bills and says that Bills continue unsalable.

November 27. Chevr John Paul Jones came this Day to the Office having arrived last night from Portsmouth, New Hampshire, where he had been long employed in fitting the ship *America,* which he saw Launched and delivered to the french Officer who is to command her.

It recalls the all but forgotten fact that as an evidence of gratitude the United States built and equipped a frigate which it presented to the French navy.

December 2d. I went to see Baron Steuben in the Country respecting his Claims & Department and during my absence several Persons applied at the Office wanting Money &c.

Dec. 19th. Baron Steuben called relative to his affairs &c.

Dec. 24. Baron Steuben and Colo Hamilton came to consult on the Money to be paid the former to take the Field so as to enable him to do his Duty in the future.

Dec. 28th. Baron Steuben respecting his Affairs in which nothing can be done here until Congress directs therein.

It is pleasant to see that the long story of the baron's troubles has an end, and an agreeable one at that. The dilatory makes a move, the indifferent shows signs of animation, there is resurrection at the State House, Congress legislates, the worthy baron can don a uniform resplendent, the inspector-general can inspect.

Jan. 2, 1783. Baron Steuben called respecting his affairs and agreeable to the Act of Congress I signed a Warrant for 2,400 Dollars.

But the new year dawned with no lightening of hearts for the hard-pressed men in the Finance Office and with no change in the daily practice there of expert side-stepping.

Jan. 16. Mr. Haym Salomon respecting Bills of Exchange. I consulted him about raising the Price he advises me to secure a good deal of Money first as he thinks an attempt to raise the Price will stop the Sale for some time and I am of the same Opinion.

CHAPTER XIV

All Pensioners of One Man's Bounty

THE strange, meandering Continental Congress, so pathetically futile, so childishly circumscribed, a kind of high-engined debating society, "strength without hands to smite," continued to hold its sessions in Philadelphia. Far beyond any delegated authority it could pretend to was its moral significance to the country. It alone was a symbol or semblance of the common will, it was the only tie that held together the thirteen independent sovereign and quarreling little nations, it was the only hope of anything like coordination—and it was a rope of sand! It could resolve and advise and debate until all hands were blue in the face and behold no other result of its labors. And yet, a figment of a legislative body, it managed to keep itself in operation and the States in some measure of unity by its mere glimpse of the shadow of an ideal.

Members of Congress received trifling salaries, but the States undertook in different degrees and ways to pay their expenses. The delegates from Virginia, for example, were allowed, nominally, traveling expenses from their homes, the upkeep of a carriage and horses and the cost of servants. Frequently the legislatures forgot or forbore to make

the appropriations for even these modest sums. Then the delegates were left to fend for themselves, and if they happened not to be of independent means they fared exceedingly ill. Independent means—there was scarcely one of them, practically speaking, that was so accoutered. In the troublous times and a country whose only national circulating medium was junk, nobody could be sure he had anything.

Among the delegates from Virginia was a young man already well noted by the discerning for his clear vision about many public problems and his firm, convinced, but reasonable way of giving out his opinions; also for a clear blue eye and an excellent voice. James Madison was his name; then thirty-one years of age, a native of Virginia but a graduate of Princeton, where he had been a little in advance of Philip Freneau. One of the subjects to which he had turned his excellent reasoning mind was money, and from the beginning he had conscientiously opposed the practice of the States, which was always to issue promises to pay.[1] His notion was that a government might properly issue money and pay money, but it was no part of the governmental function to issue promises to pay money. His outgivings on this subject naturally brought him into close touch with Morris, who had no objection to paper money, or any other, but infinite objections to an empty treasury. The two were often in consultation, sometimes with Edmund Randolph, sometimes without him. Morris liked Madison and respected him, even when he could not quite agree with him. When it came to the establish-

[1] Sidney Howard Gay, *James Madison*, pp. 20-21.

ing of a mint they traveled together. Madison was all for a mint, which would emit real money, not paper rags, and Morris was not less eager for it.

Madison was one of the best debaters up at the Grand National Oratorical Confluence otherwise known as Congress, and had some influence there. But he labored under one disadvantage that came near to wreck him. He was as poor as poverty. Not as far as real estate was concerned; his father owned a plantation; but in the way of producing daily bread and butter it availed the son nothing. No one could realize on one's holdings, and the old farm yielded little in the way of merchantable returns.

His sole dependence for daily subsistence was the legislature of Virginia, under obligations to pay the expenses of its delegates and consistently forgetting all about them. He and the others had tried the expedient of drawing on the State Treasury and reaped only another humiliating defeat.[1]

In these conditions, James Madison, invaluable member of Congress and one of the best minds in public life, often found himself in a state of acute embarrassment. Literally he was without a cent with which to buy a meal or pay for his lodging. Often he went to a session of Congress with nothing in his pockets but papers and a bunch of keys.

Morris must have told him about Haym Salomon, who was already financing von Steuben, St. Clair and others; financing them out of his private means. Madison hated to make the approach. In the first place, he hated to borrow money, which directly

[1] Letter from Madison printed and reprinted in Congressional reports.

traversed his sense of economic wisdom; and then his pride revolted at the idea of being under personal obligations to a stranger. There was no help for it, and he came to Salomon, then still in the well-known corner of the Coffee House.

"Certainly," said Salomon, and produced his purse directly. "In what amount?"

Madison said how much he thought he could get along with, and Salomon put it into his hand.

"On what terms?" asked Madison, warily.

"No terms," said the Broker to the Office of Finance. "You will repay me when you are able but I could not charge you any interest."

Madison protested that this was not businesslike procedure and offered to sign a note. Salomon said that the current rates of interest were so high he regarded them as preposterous and would give them no countenance. Besides, he was glad to be able to help a man that was serving his country. The generosity made Madison uncomfortable, but he acceded to the little man's preference. At the beginning the thing irked him and he wrote to a friend in Virginia:

> I cannot in any way make you more sensible to the importance of your kind attention to pecuniary remittances for me than by informing you that I have for some time been a pensioner on the favor of Haym Salomon, a Jew broker.

If he intended any note of disparagement in this reference it was not long in his mind. Within a month he had perceived what Haym Salomon really was and he wrote this expression of an indubitable respect and gratitude:

The kindness of our little friend in Front Street near the Coffee House, is a fund that will prevent me from extremities, but I never resort to it without great mortification, as he obstinately rejects all recompense. The price of money is so usurious that he thinks it ought to be extorted from none but those that aim at a profitable speculation. To a necessitous delegate he gratuitously spares a supply out of his private stock.

Not to one only; he financed all that were in want and kept the machine going. But for him James Wilson would have been compelled to resign his seat and retire to private life, as he was without means to live from day to day. In that case the country would have lost the services of its greatest legal mind, a framer of the Constitution and one of the first judges of the Federal Supreme Court.[1]

Edmund Randolph, two years Madison's junior, who from the beginning had been a glowing Revolutionist, openly defying a Tory father, was another. Salomon for the time regularly supported him—Edmund Randolph, who had been delegate to the rebellious Virginia Convention, Attorney-General of Virginia, aide to Washington, member of Congress, destined to be Attorney-General and then Secretary of State of the United States.

Joseph Reed, an outstanding member of Congress, was another. A man of varied attainments and a character so genuinely high that he deserves an enduring place among the best of his times. He had been president of the first Pennsylvania Convention in Janu-

[1] As to this, Henry Wheaton wrote: "Judge Wilson, so distinguished for his labors in the convention that framed the Federal Constitution, would have retired from public service had he not been sustained by the timely aid of Haym Salomon, as delicately as it was generously administered." Peters, p. 19.

ary, 1775, an uncompromising rebel, one of the first to offer his services to Washington, to whom he became secretary. He went far out of his way to fight as a volunteer at Brandywine, Germantown and Monmouth; he refused a brigadier-general's commission offered in recognition of his bravery. It was he that as President of Pennsylvania detected and exposed the frauds that Arnold had committed in Philadelphia. It was he also that made the immortal response when George Johnstone, one of the British Commissioners of 1778, offered him a bribe. "Such as I am, the King of England is not rich enough to buy me." The world does not treasure many better sentences. It was he that now lived and continued his labors in Congress by the help of this Polish Jew.

Arthur Lee, the melancholy, the dyspeptic, who had come near disrupting and ruining the American embassy to France in 1776, was another. Educated abroad to be a physician, he had turned his attention to political philosophy and had written of it so well that Dr. Johnson and Edmund Burke sought him out. He was now an active member of Congress from Virginia and a pensioner of Haym Salomon.

Thomas Mifflin was another, a Philadelphia merchant who had been a member of the first Continental Congress, a volunteer soldier who by merit and service had risen to be major-general; a good legislator also, having eloquence and vision. It was he that as Governor of Pennsylvania came long after to have a chief hand in putting down the Whisky Insurrection. He, too, owed his continuance in public life to the generosity of Haym Salomon.

Arthur St. Clair, whom we have before encountered in these annals, continued upon the same list; so did James Monroe, then only twenty-four years old, but already in full career. He was eighteen when the Declaration of Independence was signed, a few days after he had been graduated from old William and Mary College. He went at once to the front as a volunteer under General Mercer, fought at Harlem, White Plains and Trenton, winning a captaincy in the Trenton fight. Then he was aide to Lord Stirling, fighting at Brandywine, Germantown and Monmouth. He was now a delegate to Congress from Virginia and a marked man, though no one would have ventured to predict for him two elections to the Presidency and the promulgation of a doctrine that has made a hundred years of history.

Major William McPherson, partizan troop commander like Marion and Emanuel, one that had been brought up in the British army but had joined the Americans as a matter of faith and conviction, he was another.

Major David Salisbury Franks was another, the young Canadian that fought for principle. He was now about to go abroad on one of his delicate and vital diplomatic errands and was short of funds because nothing had been appropriated for him. He must be financed by Haym Salomon.

Theodoric Bland was another, a poet, a physician, a good soldier, claiming (on unassailable grounds) a distinguished descent, his mother being Jane Rolfe, a great-granddaughter of Pocahontas. He had been educated at Edinburgh, but nothing dimmed the

American in him. Older than most of the Revolutionists, he was not less fiery. At the outset of the trouble, when independence was only a dream, he took his pen in hand and scarified the royal governor of his State, the ever-hated Dunmore. When the struggle was joined, he raised and was captain of the First Troop of Virginia Horse and fought until near the end, when he was made a member of Congress and was in that capacity when Haym Salomon became his friend and benefactor.

Joseph Jones, the oldest of the group and one of the oldest men in Congress, was another. He was fifty-five, had been a member of the old insurgent Virginia House of Burgesses and then of the Continental Congress from almost its beginning, a judge of the General Court of Virginia and an able jurist, he could have been ill spared.

John F. Mercer was another.

Madison testified to these things. Freely he acknowledged that when other sources of income had failed them, it was Haym Salomon that came to their rescue and enabled them to go on with their work.[1] And Salomon, he said nothing. As in the other instances we have observed, his lips were sealed upon his contributions. So far as we can now discover, he never asked to be repaid, probably never expected to be repaid. But for the great mass of receipts and checks, once the inheritance of his son and now scattered among the autograph fiends, the world would have known little about the voluntary pension office that he conducted. These, and some scattering entries

[1] Sparks MS.

in his account at the bank, covering a small part of the time he was feeding the hungry among the delegates, were the mute witnesses of the story. Thus it appears from his ledger account that in a part of 1782 and a part of 1783 he paid out in this way to—

James Madison	$ 426.00
General St. Clair	220.00
Baron Steuben (1783)	100.00
Kosciusko	142.00
General Mifflin (1782)	738.00
Edmund Randolph (1782)	378.00
Edmund Randolph (1783)	98.00
General Mercer (1782-3)	5,373.64
James Wilson	3,452.90
J. Ross (1783)	8,000.00
Through McCrea, the confidential clerk (1783)	493.30
Joseph Jones (1782-3)	745.08

If we continue to speak of Shylock, who is fiction, we might occasionally speak of Salomon, who is fact.

Some of his pensioners he had helped long before the bank was opened and his account begun. Remembering how incomplete is the above list, it is obvious that the total of his benevolence to these needy patriots must have exceeded even the indebtedness that he was then piling up and carrying at the bank, the load that in the end crushed his estate. In other words, he strained his credit to keep these legislators and field marshals alive, and with that fact, which stands beyond doubting, we may think the climax of his story is reached. He was the unapproached para-

dox of his times; in finance a kind of superstrategist, a financial magician, and for his fellow soldiers a big-hearted, open-pursed, shy but indefatigable Goodman Easy, an impossibility, a Cheeryble in flesh and blood. We need not imagine anything about it; we have it all in the record. When the facts were first beginning to appear the supposition was general that the supplies were furnished in some way of business. There was no business about this; it was all charity. Jared Sparks in his life of Gouverneur Morris published a letter written by Morris in which he bluntly declares that "the person who did loan anything to a member to relieve his distress in that day was in no expectation of ever getting repaid." No one could have known that better than Salomon.

The year in which the entries close in the bankbook, he was called upon to supply the entire pay and expenses of Joseph Jones, Randolph and Madison, of the Virginia delegation. These three had agreed among themselves that, assumably because Madison's needs were less acute, he should receive fifty pounds less than the other two. Salomon ignored this arrangement and paid Madison as he paid the others.[1]

It appears that to Salomon all these things were in the day's work and incidental to his job, which was to further the Revolution. He had other beneficiaries in their way quite as important as any on our list. Early in 1779 there had arrived secretly, in a roundabout zigzag via the West Indies, Don Francisco Rendon and with him, through Salomon's help, came into the

[1] Peters, p. 20.

story the shadowy, vague but at times momentous figure of Spain.

Don Francisco was the personal emissary and unaccredited ambassador of Carlos III, then Spanish monarch. The King of France could send openly an ambassador to the new Republic because France was at war with England, but the King of Spain must preserve the outwards of peace. He was keenly interested in the outcome of the struggle in America but impelled by different and simpler reasons. In Spain there was no rising tide of democracy, no agitations about the Social Contract, no Rousseau and no doubts of the everlasting glories of absolute monarchy. The King of Spain had no sentiment about the American conflict. He wanted just one thing and hoped that out of the turmoil he saw arising in Europe an opportunity would come to obtain that thing.

It was the recovery of Gibraltar.

He sent Don Francisco as his confidential agent to observe and to report and to give all the encouragement he could without risking a break with England. Don Francisco proved to be an astute and courteous gentleman who speedily became popular and dispensed encouragement and cheer without openly violating the laws of a professed neutrality. He took one of the largest houses in Philadelphia [1] and lived there in a way befitting the agent of him who was so great a sovereign. But there was one thing that was ill-provided for him. The money to support him, his rank and his operations had to run the chances in

[1] Morris says in the Diary that he secured this house for Washington's stay in Philadelphia. Diary of November 28, 1781.

transit of the British blockade. When it was captured on the high seas, the royal agents that sent it did not know of its loss. The result was that Don Francisco had not proceeded long before he found himself in a most embarrassing situation. He had to keep up a front of affluence that he might not dishonor his august employer and he had literally nothing upon which to support it.

His appeals to home authorities must have gone the way of the funds that had been sent him or otherwise failed to reach their mark, for a period of two years followed in which he had no remittances from abroad. But his distress had been relieved. He had heard of Haym Salomon, the universal provider, the man with the stringless purse, the incredible wonder-worker that seemed to be able to supply every need. He had appealed to this inexhaustible benevolence and for two years had been supported from the same Pactolian fountain that kept the delegates from starving. Don Francisco himself is the indubitable witness. In a letter written in 1783 to Don José Marie de Navarro, Governor-General of Cuba, he says:

> Mr. Salomon has advanced the money for the service of his most Catholic Majesty [the common title of the King of Spain] and I am indebted to his friendship, in this particular, for the support of my character as his most Catholic Majesty's agent here, with any degree of credit and reputation; and without it I should not have been able to render that protection and assistance to his Majesty's subjects that his Majesty enjoins and my duty requires.

These advances, $10,000 Spanish, were not repaid.[1]

[1] Senate Reports, No. 177, Thirty-first Congress.

The mere presence of Don Francisco was an asset of inestimable value to the American cause. It stiffened the patriots with the hope that Spain would follow the example of France and openly give its support to the Revolution. At all times it revived them with the knowledge that their efforts were before the eyes of the world. If America received no such financial assistance from Spain as she received from the generous Hollanders, the moral reenforcement was in a way almost as good. Spain was then a powerful nation, one of the most powerful in Europe, and its open support of the United States would have gone far to end the war.

Don Francisco was not the only stranger in a strange land that found help at the same source. Monsieur Barbé Marbois, who was the French chargé d'affaires, had frequent loans of Salomon, and so did Monsieur de la Forest, the French agent, whose name appears in the records of the Bank as "Mr. Fory." To Count de la Luzerne, that good friend of the Revolutionists, whose services have never been adequately acknowledged, Salomon seems to have lent in three years a total of $61,000, though this is not certain.[1]

If the loan to Rendon was never repaid, neither, it is sad to observe, were most of the others.

[1] Senate Reports, No. 177, Thirty-first Congress. The apparent advances to de la Forest and de la Luzerne probably meant no more than that Salomon had transactions in bills with them, but the committee put a different construction upon the items.

CHAPTER XV

A Speculation That Went Wrong

ONE of the curious features of the story of the American Revolution is that so far as the records show and so far as can be deduced from other sources, the Americans and their French associates went on together in some degree of harmony. This in allies and copartners is so far from the usual thing that one is moved to doubt and to wonder whether the responsible men happened to be on both sides abnormally good-natured or there has been an amiable concealment. Even the intimate revelations of the Diary, which being without design must be something like the truth, have nothing that hints of a rift in the Franco-American concert. Rochambeau and Washington got through on excellent terms, though perhaps this was due to the fact that Rochambeau allowed Washington to attend to all the strategy and to exercise unquestioned a supreme command. There was one occasion when Morris fell foul of a Frenchman that he suspected of being a swindler [1] but the incident passed without international discord. Haym Salomon did not fare so well and the one error that he seems to have made in his business management at that time grew out of his

[1] Diary, January 5, 1782.

illimitable kindness to the strangers within Philadelphia's gates.

We had the beginning of this story in the Diary, entry of July 29, 1781. The rest of it grows upon us from day to day in the same record, where we have only to make the cryptogram notes fit into facts known from other sources.

By this time, even most commanders of British cruisers at sea had begun to be aware that the war was over, and the pleasant pastime of chasing merchantmen had lost its zest. For American skippers and owners the dangers of capture grew progressively less. Another period of noisy prosperity arrived in business, such as is always to be expected when a great repression is relaxed. There had never been in the New World an equal chance to acquire wealth swiftly. A tide of speculative fever came upon Philadelphia, speculation in many things but chiefly in vessels and cargoes. Two French civilians that had come over in the army's wake succumbed to the prevailing mania. One was this de Brassine, intendant of the French hospital and the other his friend de Mars, whose place in the picture had something to do with the same institution. Together they arranged a scheme by which they were to buy of Haym Salomon some of Morris's bills of exchange, and de Brassine to give for them his note at four months. By that time they expected to make their winning and to be able to take care of the note. To carry out their venture they induced Salomon to endorse de Brassine's note, easily obtained the bills of exchange, the equivalent of ready cash, and so furnished, went on

with their transaction. They did not suspect that they were starting an international episode.

De Brassine's note was for 3,514 pounds, 6 shillings and 3 pence in Pennsylvania State currency. It was dated July 30, 1782.

Before the four months had expired the speculative venture, whatever it was, turned bottom up. Probably it was a shipment to a European port of the produce for which the foreigner was now supposed to be willing to pay decorative prices. Either the supposition proved groundless or the ship crossed the track of a British captain that had no faith in the peace negotiations. When November 1 arrived de Brassine and de Mars refused to pay the notes, which went to protest, leaving Salomon to make good both principal and interest.

It is evident that the incident aroused the wrath of Morris. As Salomon had acted in the treasury's behalf the loss must really fall on the visionary funds that the superintendent was so tirelessly chasing. Therefore the next Diary entries are of unusual interest.

Feb. 7. Haym Salomon respecting the Affairs of Mr. De Mars and Mr. Brassine relating the Substance of a Conversation he had with the former who wants to evade making good the Engagements of the latter but which from a variety of Circumstances it appears he is liable to pay for.

Feb. 11. Haym Salomon on the Business of Mr. De Mars.

Feb. 20th. Haym Salomon brought me some further information respecting the transactions of Mr. de Mars and Mr. Brassine with the Bills they bot of me.

Feb. 21st. Haym Salomon Broker respecting the Affairs of Mr. De Mars and Brassine, Collecting Information of their

Transactions to show the Justice Mons[s] De Mars becoming liable for Brassine.

Feb. 22nd. Haym Salomon Respecting Mr. Brassine I told him he may stop his enquiries until he hears farther from me as I am to have another Conference with Mr. De Mars on this business.

March 20. I sent for Mr. Haym Salomon and informed him that Mons[r] Tarle the Intendant of the French Army had peremptorily refused to pay the Note signed by Mons[r] De Brassine the 30th day of July last for £3514—6—3 Pennsylvania Currency, payable to the said Haym Salomon or Order on or before the first Day of November, 1782. That Mons[r] De Mars the Chief of the Hospital Department had also refused Payment both of these Gentlemen alledging that Mons[r] de Brassine was not authorized to make such dealings or Engagements on Account of the Army. Mr. Salomon Paid this note to me in part of the Account of Bills of Exchange drawn on Mr. Grand in favor of the said Haym Salomon for Lvrs. 120,000 which he alledges and which I believe were by him sold to the said De Brassine as I had previously Consented to the Sale on being assured by Salomon that the said Brassine was employed to transact the Business of the french Hospital in this City. That his excell[y] the Minister of France had sold his own private Bills on Credit to the said Brassine and finally that the King was to pay. In this confidence I agreed to a sale of Bills above mentioned and afterwards to others of my own Property and now his Employers refuse to make good his Engagements under pretence that he was not duly Authorized having first seized the Man his Papers & Effects in the King's name—I have applyed to them for payment and redress which they refuse. I therefore determine to seek it by the Laws of the Land and the more so as by means of Enquiries which their Refusal has led me to make, I have strong reason to believe that Mr. de Mars the Chief of the Hospital and his agent De Brassine have both made Use of the King's name of their Credit obtained as his servants for private Pursuits in which they were jointly interested. Mr. De Mars being able, I have directed Salomon to arrest him for the Payment of

De Brassine's Note and immediately to pursue all proper Steps to prove that De Mars either authorized De Brassine or was interested in his Transactions, I must here in justice to Haym Salomon declare that altho he has indorsed the Note I consider him only as a Broker in this Business and not liable to pay as an endorser thereof.

March 21. Haym Salomon informed me of his having arrested Mr. de Mars agreeable to my Orders, &c.

That gentle speech and persuasive way for which Haym Salomon had repute came now into action. They could not be mythical; look at the results in this case. He went to the jail, he talked with a prisoner that was undoubtedly belligerent and probably neurotic with fear, and he talked this most unpromising subject into a confession and frank avowal. Alas, that we do not know how he achieved this wonder! It was said of him that when he asked for the payment of a debt owing to him he did it in a way that caused the debtor to view him as a long-lost brother. He must have been at his best that day in the jail for observe this:

March 22nd. Haym Salomon respecting the Affairs of Mr. de Brassine and M. De Mars he says he had been with the latter in the Prison where he acknowledges that he denyed his Transactions and told lies to save himself.

March 25th. Haym Salomon respecting Mr. de Brassine.

April 1. Haym Salomon on the Business of Mons^{r} de Mars stating the Evidence he has Collected &c, &c.

April 19th. Haym Salomon for Bills and respecting Mons^{r} De Mars Affair.

April 10. Haym Salomon for Bills &c.

April 17. Haym Salomon respecting Mr. De Mars.

April 22. Haym Salomon respecting Mons[r] De Mars Collecting evidence.

April 24. Haym Salomon respecting Mons[r] De Mars and De Brassines that Suit is to be tryed on Saturday.

April 25. Haym Salomon respecting the Law Suit with Mons[r] de Mars which is to be tried tomorrow, collecting Evidence. &c

April 26th. All this day I attended the Trial in the Supreme Court with Mons[r] de Mars and had the Pleasure to Cast him; so that Mons[r] Debrassine's note for upwards of £3,500 will be paid to the Use of the United States.

The thing went prosperously for a time, as these entries show:

April 29th. Directed Mr. Haym Salomon to demand Payment of Mon[s] de mars in Consequence of the Verdict obtained against him.

May 1. Mr. Hayms Salomon informed me that he had received the Money for Mons[r] de Brassine's note of Mons[r] de Mars and that he will discharge the same at the Bank. He says he paid the Tavern Charges of the Court and Jury the Cost of Subpoenas and serving then on Witnesses I desired him also to pay the Lawyer's Fees and bring one Account for the whole.

May 5th. Mr. Haym Salomon came this morning and gave me a Draft on the Bank for the Money recovered of Mons[r] de Mars and Monsr de Brassine, he has not yet paid the Lawyers Fees therefore must bring in an Account for Costs of this Lawsuit after all Charges are paid.

The story did not end without one more flurry. The chief counsel for Salomon in the litigation had been James Wilson, whom he had befriended and assisted in times of need. It seems that Mr. Wilson had no notion of allowing personal considerations to en-

ter into the basic business of fees, which he upheld with vigor.[1]

May 14. Mr. Haym Salomon informs me that Mr. Wilson refused to receive less than fifteen half Joes. Consequently each of the Lawyers must have the same Sum in the Affairs of Brassine and De mars.

May 21st. The Hon. James Wilson Esq[r] called to explain that the Fee he required of Haym Salomon is two fold, first five half Joes for his Opinion in the Case and as to the Manner of bringing the Action against Mons[r] de Mars and secondly for his Fee as Council in prosecuting the Action Ten half Joes.

"Joe" was the current name of a johannes, an obsolete Portuguese coin of 12,800 reis, worth in American money about $13.50. A half Joe would be about

[1] This story had a somewhat odd sequel. In the Manuscript Room of the New York Public Library, Ford Collection, is a letter from Louis G. Otto, French Vice Consul at Philadelphia, written November 22, 1786, and directed to Benjamin Franklin, who was then President of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania. It prays for the release of de Brassine who has been all this time locked up in the Philadelphia jail as a consequence of his unlucky attempt upon Haym Salomon. He owed Salomon 90,000 livres.

A letter from Robert Morris to Franklin, in the Morris Letter-book, Library of Congress, is apparently written in answer to a query by Franklin, prompted by Otto's appeal. Morris says that when de Mars, in the spring of 1783, refused to pay his indebtedness "a suit was commenced against Mr. de Mars by Salomon the Broker for all the Bills which he sold to de Mars and to Brassine," and the jury found for Salomon. When Franklin replied to Otto he said that there had been filed against de Brassine five suits of which the second and third had never been satisfied and that these suits constituted the only obstacle to de Brassine's release.

On May 19, 1787—it will be seen that they moved still with deliberation in those days—Otto's letter was read at a meeting of the Supreme Executive Council and the sheriff of Philadelphia County was ordered to deliver de Brassine to Barbé Marbois, French chargé d'affaires, "on condition that all debts with which he stands charged as due to the citizens of any of the United States and for which he is confined are first discharged or that such creditors are satisfied with his removal." On these conditions poor de Brassine regained his liberty after four years of imprisonment. But the matter having been assumed by Morris, the payment, if one were made, meant nothing to the Salomon estate.

$6.75, so that Lawyer Wilson wanted about $33.75 for giving his advice on the case and $67.50 for trying it. The wind-up of the matter is an entry in Morris's accounts paying Salomon these items for the lawyer's fees.

This year saw in Philadelphia before the eyes of Haym Salomon an early observance of the Fourth of July as a holiday and that in a somewhat amateurish fashion, one might think.

July 4th. This being the anniversary of that Auspicious Day on which the Declaration of the Independence of the United States was made, I came to the Office in the Forenoon but dismissed the Clerks from Service that they might Enjoy the Day in the manner most agreeable to themselves. Finding on my return from Prince Town that no Public Entertainment was provided for that Day, I invited a Company of forty gentlemen, Consisting of Foreigners, Military & Civil Officers and Citizens and spent the afternoon and evening in great Festivity and Mirth.

Throughout all this time he seemed to have the same refuge in every emergency.

May 21st. I sent for Mr. Haym Salomon respecting the Sale of Bills of Exchange which he says are dull, few persons having Money and very few wanting Bills.

June 9th. Mr. Holker, Haym Salomon and Mr. Fitzsimmons for bills of Exchange which I sold to them at 6/9d for five Livres for their notes.

He shows plainly the respect and confidence he reposed in Salomon. Even when he was testy or hurried he would always listen to the little man from Front Street.

June 10th. John Wright Stanley Esr[e] came to purchase Bills but being hurried with Letters for the Post I desired him to call tomorrow, he then sent Salomon and I agreed to let him have the bills.

July 11th. Haym Salomon respecting bills on account of French Government &c.

July 14th. Haym Salomon respecting bills of Exchange.

July 15th. Haym Salomon for Bills of Exchange &c.

July 18th. Haym Salomon for payment of one of Mr. Moylan's Drafts, &c.

Many were the afflictions of this good man, many and diverse. It was not enough that he must be driven to the verge of madness by clamoring creditors he could not pay but there must be a concerted assault upon the notes he was issuing (when he must) to meet the debts of the government.

July 19th [*1783*]. Mr. Thomas Franklin brought me a letter from Mr. Fisher of New York advising that he has apprehended five villains who counterfeited my notes &c.

Sometimes the market for bills slumped when most he needed money.

July 25th. I sent for Haym Salomon to consult him respecting Exchange he says bills are rather of dull Sale just now.

August 4th. I sent for Haym Salomon respecting Bills of Exchange, he is to enquire what can be done.

Anybody that had an attack of paranoia or was temporarily deranged must needs run to the superintendent with his sizzling visions.

August 6th. Mr. Robert Moorhead applied with discoveries of Perpetual Motion &c but went away convinced that his discoveries are very defective.

Also anybody in need found the same path to the same door.

August 25th. Mr. Thomas Kilbuck one of the Indian youths under the care of Congress applied for Cloathes. I told him he must get them through Col°. George Morgan to whose care Congress has entrusted the Business.

These things scarcely interrupt the regular flow of the transactions through Salomon.

August 17th. Haym Salomon for Bills of Exchange declined selling any at present.

September 11th. Haym Salomon for Bills of Exchange I cannot sell at present.

September 15th. Mr. Haym Salomon whom I sent for came and I desired he would immediately enquire and inform me what Price can be had for Bills on Amsterdam at 90 Days Sight.

We have a natural curiosity to know how such a man lived.

The first Philadelphia city directory was not printed until a later period; there is no way to fix exactly where stood his house that more than a century ago was swallowed up in the great maw of commerce. But we have certain evidence that the family tenemented in the same building with his office,[1] partly above and partly behind it, as was the custom of the times. The Salomons lived well, though not spaciously; they seem to have had no more than two

[1] Administrator's inventory.

rooms upstairs. But they had a horse and they had a chaise, and the horse was worth nearly $100 in real money. The chaise was worth still more—at least $125.

Within the house were articles of comfort and luxury. Mr. Salomon owned a mahogany dining table and a walnut dining table and six walnut chairs, and a walnut bureau and a bed, bedstead and curtains that were worth nearly $100. He had plate, too; much plate for the times. There was a "large-bellied silver tankard," and a small straight silver tankard, a pint can in silver with two tumblers, gilt inside. He had large servers and small servers, all in silver, and a punch bowl with a punch strainer and silver pepper boxes. He had a large silver coffee-pot and a silver teapot and two tea cannisters in silver with slop bowl and sugar dish and salt cellars, all silver, and a dozen knives with plated handles. He had a gold watch and chain, with seals and a diamond ring, but seems to have been destitute of other jewelery. He had stoves and stove pipe, and in his kitchen were six walnut chairs.[1]

He was a Mason, a member of Solomon Lodge No. 2, A. F. and A. M., Philadelphia, and he showed what he was in his loyalties by joining the Philadelphia county militia, broken in health as he was.[2] He paid taxes like a good citizen, but it is an ominous fact that they diminished yearly after he began to be almoner to the human race.

Other signs of the times suggest that all was not now well with him, at least in his worldly affairs and

[1] So in the administrators' inventory. [2] Noted in inventory.

cash drawer. One might think from an advertisement that appeared in the "Pennsylvania Journal" of this year, 1783, that the daily drains upon him had exhausted his resources and that he was too hard pressed to meet the demands of his needy dependents.

To Be Sold

Five Houses in Second Street between Arch Street and the New Market, among which is the valuable one in which the Naval Office is kept . .

For further particulars enquire of
Haym Solomon, Broker.

It has been believed [1] that he had at one time large holdings of real estate in Philadelphia, but it is still uncertain whether these houses in Second Street were his property or he was acting as an agent for another. The one thing that is clear enough from the reports of his administrators as from other sources is that he gave with a total disregard of all consequences to himself, and that these largesses were scattering his fortune. He gave his money without hesitation and without stint, not to be seen of men and not foolishly as a spendthrift, but because being enlisted in this cause it seemed to him greater than anything else in the world. The heroic men he had known in Poland looked in that way upon such a struggle. The Sons of Liberty in New York had the same uplifting of head and spirit. He gave his money; one may suppose that if it were necessary such a man might give his houses or anything else.

[1] Thirty-seventh Congress, Second Session, Senate Report No. 65.

CHAPTER XVI

The Last Gift of All

THE government of the Netherlands and, in a way, the people of that country, had been induced to advance funds to the Revolution that had neither funds nor finance, and this help was at last beginning to be available—in pieces. The haunted superintendent sought to take advantage of it. He could now draw bills of exchange against Amsterdam, but would anybody buy them and in exchange give him that rare commodity, Hard Cash, without which he could not go on? He does not know, but he knows where he can find out.

September 16th. Mr. Haym Salomon says he cannot get more than 3/ [shillings] per Guilder for Bills. I told him to sell some at that price.

There has come a period of depression in the business world. The fallacious boom of a few months ago has been followed by a slump. There was really little to base prosperity upon except sentiment and general joy, which are nice things but not merchantable. Foreign trade is again falling off.

September 18th. Haym Salomon come to inform me that he has with some difficulty sold G 40,000 [guilders] at 3/ [shillings] per Guilder at 90 days Sight.

The market sagged lower and lower. A Philadelphia dealer named John Ross offered to take bills at 2/10 a guilder and Morris refused. Sharp as were his necessities he had now, as so often before, a rugged determination not to allow the market to break under him.[1]

September 23rd. Haym Salomon respecting Bills of Exchange.

October 7th. Haym Salomon respecting Bills of Exchange which are falling and of dull Sale.

October 9th. Haym Salomon respecting Bills of Exchange which are falling and Sales Slow.

October 15th. Salomon's Young man for Bills of Exchange which were delivered at 3/ per Guilder.

Poor man, all troubles seemed to land soon or late upon his overburdened shoulders. The Dutch government had now completed its recognition of the independence of the United States by sending a minister, Mr. Vanderkele. France had been the first nation to pay this honor; Holland was the second. It was felt that there should be some public recognition of Dutch sympathy, which from the first had been on the side of the Revolution, particularly among the merchants, for those of Amsterdam had subscribed liberally to American funds. But who was to arrange for a suitable entertainment in celebration of this new sign of good will? The Superintendent of Finance, handy man for all occasions. Therefore:

October 27th. Major Jackson came here at my request respecting the entertainment to be given by Congress at Prince Town

[1] Diary, September 19.

to His Excellency, Mr. Vanderkele, the Major agrees to go up in order to assist Genl Lincoln in making the necessary preparations and arrangements.

October 28th. Baron Steuben to consult about placing certain Individuals in the Hospital. I desired a return of their names & Circumstances &c Haym Salomon for a few bills on Amsterdam at 3/ per Guilder.

No sooner was one trouble mastered than another appeared. The very bank that Robert Morris had founded, the child of his genius, the institution on which his hopes had been set as a financial prop for a floundering country and a helping hand through his own official vicissitudes, now turned against him and refused to discount the notes he had received in payment for bills of exchange.

October 30th. Haym Salomon the Broker called on the Subject of Bills and said Mr. Lewis had been informed by Mr. Fitzsimmons that if he made a further application for Bills on Credit he might obtain them. Upon this I told Salomon that he should dispose of no Bills but for the Money, that the Bank would no longer discount for this Office and therefore the Public Bills must be sold for Cash only, and more especially as there were but few remaining to be disposed of.

Novr. 3rd [*1783*]. Last Night I returned from Prince Town to which Place I had attended Mr. Vanderkele the minister Plenipotentiary from the United Netherlands, assisted in my Official Capacity at the Public Entertainment there, Visited the Members of Congress and His Excellency General Washington, and had a conference with a Committee of Congress at Prince Town respecting the Dutch Loan which they promised not to meddle with, but will stop all other Loans &c &c.

Novr. 12th. Baron Steuben brought me a letter which he had recd from Genl Washington requesting him to break up the Hospital here. I approve thereof and desired that he shall send

off such of the Invalids as must go for West Point discharge such as can be discharged and all other Sick to get them taken into the Pennsylvania Hospital as sick Patients and I will engage for their Pay &c.

November 17th. Haym Salomon says there is no demand for bills of Exchange very few Selling and the price falling.

November 20th. The Honble the Major Genl Baron Steuben to inform me of his farther proceedings in the Hospital Department.

December 3d. Salomon for Bills of Exchange.

Decr. 10. This day I went out to Frankford to meet his Excy Genl. Washington and brought him to Lodge at my House.

Dec. 12th. This Day I attended His Excy Genl. Washington to an Entertainment given by the Merchants of this City.

Dec. 13th. I sent for Haym Salomon respecting bills of which it seems there is plenty at market.

Dec. 15th. Mr. Haym Salomon respecting bills, &c.

Dec. 17th. Salomon respecting bills of Exchange, notes &c.

The winter was severe. In the inevitable reaction that had come upon business the poor suffered much in Philadelphia. There went about among them one that came to be known as "the Good Jew," distributing money, real money, specie money, to those that needed it most and without regard to religion or race. He has been sufficiently identified as the same "little friend" of the Coffee House that Madison and others called "the Good Samaritan." According to tradition he gave away $2,000 in such charities that memorable and bitter winter.

Two other indications of the man as he really was in his inner self and essential spirit were recorded this year. He was instrumental in founding and furthering a society whose object was to befriend

strangers in Philadelphia, no matter what their creed or race, and he was one of the signers and no doubt the chief promoter of a petition for civil liberty presented to the government of Pennsylvania.[1] There still lingered even in that progressive State a trace of the ancient prejudices of mankind's intellectual babyhood. The constitution contained a clause that every member of the assembly before taking his seat must subscribe to a declaration of faith that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament were given "by divine inspiration." This amounted to the oath that for so many centuries kept Jews from the British House of Commons. It was in fact the old civil disability of the Jews, dragged from the dust heap and resurrected in free Pennsylvania.

The petition for the redress of this antique wrong was signed first by that Rabbi Seixas who had attested his devotion to the country by closing his congregation and departing from the city when New York was taken by the British. The just, reasonable protest now submitted was effectual, and Jews in Pennsylvania won to the same basis before the law that was recognized for Americans of any other religious faith.

Thus 1783 ended and a new year came in with little improvement in the outlook. There was still no nation and toward the creating of one no steps taken that would cheer the heart of a drooping patriot. The jealousies among the States still rankled; the lesson of cohesion had not yet gone deep enough, although the Superintendent of Finance could have testified

[1] *Vide* Appendix.

warmly to the need of it. There was still no national revenue; the only money with which the superintendent could meet the demands upon him came from the sales of his bills, the product of the Dutch loan and the irregular contributions from the States. One great source of his anxieties, the pay and maintenance of the standing army, had largely come to an end. The thing had happened that the wise men had said never could happen. The troops had been disbanded and had gone home peaceably and quietly, melting back into the population without rioting or rapine. But there were still great arrears of pay to be met. Congress had voted half-pay to the officers with nothing to provide it more substantial than the graceful gesture and the hopeful promise, and many of these officers were in conditions of great destitution.

Yet in many ways the horizon was clearing though few could see the sky patches. The States, sovereign, free and independent, awoke at last to the fact that they had delegates in Congress and that these delegates must be fed and lodged; it was no longer needful for Haym Salomon to provide their daily bread. His thoughts turned to New York. Perhaps his sagacious mind saw the advantages New York had as a port and foretold its coming greatness, or he may have thought that the peace would largely take from him his function of handling bills of exchange. It is an interesting speculation whether he knew his own condition. He could hardly have overlooked that mounting debt at the bank, and still he wrote about this time to McCrea, his confidential clerk, of a hope

to retire soon from business and of the Revolutionary securities he held as the base of that hope. They were worth little then; he had plainly the expectation that with the establishment of a permanent government they would come to their face value. His health was bad and growing worse. He must have had some serious thoughts about his own future and his children's.

Meantime the bank had been a success, an obvious and bay-tree success, with the inevitable result that watchful gentlemen in the trading way began to plan another that they too might have share in this good thing.

This greatly disturbed Morris. Haym Salomon had continued to come daily for consultations about the ever persisting bills of exchange. On January 17 of the new year (1784) he came with the news of this unhappy development in the history of competition.[1] Two days later he came again with further information. On February 10 he knew still more about it.

Feby. 10th. Haym Salomon informs me that Edward Shippen and others chosen President and Directors of a new Bank lately instituted in Opposition to the national Bank have presented a Petition for a Charter of Incorporation.

The project of returning to New York was still uppermost in Salomon's mind, and he determined to make a visit there that he might satisfy himself as to the chances. In a way, the journey fell in with Morris's plans.

Feby. 13th. Mr. Salomon informs me that he is going to New York tomorrow evening. In Consequence desired him to call for Dispatches of this Office.

[1] Diary of that date.

Feby. 14th. Haym Salomon comes to get the Letters intended by him to New York. These not being copied entirely desired him to call between five and six in the evening.

It does not appear how long he remained in New York on this visit but two weeks later he was again in daily consultation with the superintendent.

Febry. 28th. Mr. Salomon with an account of certain Transactions relative to the bank, the proposed Incorporation &c.

Saturday, 6 March, 1784. Mr. Salomon giving an Account of the State of the New Bank, Rate of Exch &c.

Thursday, 25th [March]. Sent for Mr. Haym Salomon and desired him to offer Bills on Charlestown and Richmond for twenty thousand and on Annapolis for ten thousand Dollars being in the whole fifty thousand Dollars. The pressing Demands of the Bank for Money render this Supernecessary.

Thursday 1st April. Mr. Salomon the Broker to give information of the Exchange &c.

Another journey to New York now intervened.

Friday 2nd [*April*]. Haym Salomon announcing his Intention to go to New York on which desired him to call to Morrow for Letters.

Salomon had now fully determined to change his base. By May he had formulated his plans, prepared his office in Wall Street and taken on a partner, Jacob Mordecai. The following advertisement dated May 7, 1784, appeared in the "Pennsylvania Journal" and "Weekly Advertiser":

Haym Salomon, Broker to the Office of Finance, having provided a license for entering the employment of an Auctioneer

in the City of New York, has now opened for the reception of every species of merchandise his house No. 22 Wall Street, lately occupied by Mr. Anthony Bleeker (one of the best stands in the city) and every branch of business which in the smallest degree appertains to the profession of Factor, Auctioneer and Broker will be transacted in it, with the fidelity, respect and punctuality which have hitherto characterized his dealings.

The house in point of convenience and situation is exceedingly well calculated for the different kinds of business above mentioned; and he thinks it almost unnecessary to assure those who may favour it with their orders that the strictest attention shall be paid to them, and the utmost care and solicitude employed to promote their interests.

The nature of his business enables him to make remittances to any part of the world with peculiar facility, and this he hopes will operate considerably in his favour with those who live at a distance.

A desire of being more extensively useful and of giving universal satisfaction to the public are (*sic*) among his principal motives for opening the house and shall be the great leading principles of its transactions.

By being Broker to the Office of Finance and honoured with its confidence, all those sums have passed through his hands, which the generosity of the French Monarch, and the affection of the merchants of the United Provinces prompted them to furnish us with, to enable us to support the expense of the war and which have so much contributed to its successful and happy termination. This is a circumstance which has established his credit and reputation, and procured him the confidence of the public—a confidence which it is his study and ambition to merit and increase, by severely performing all his engagements.

The business will be conducted upon the most liberal and extensive plan, under the firm name of Haym Salomon and Jacob Mordecai.

Philadelphia, May 7, 1784.

This is printed in French and English and is followed by one of Haym Salomon offering his office in Front Street for sale.

But before the transfer could be effected and the new business launched, the failing of his health began to be more than ever apparent. The cough he had incurred in his prison days had never left him and now grew steadily worse. He was not able to open the Wall Street house nor to see it in operation. He died in his Front Street home in Philadelphia, Thursday, January 6, 1785, when he was only forty-five years old.

He was buried in the old Jewish burying ground to the sincere mourning of hundreds he had helped.

He should have left to his wife and four children a fortune for the times conspicuously large. He had been in the thick of a great rising tide of business exactly suited to his genius and skill.

It appeared that for so wise a business man he had done a strange thing. He had left no will.

Five administrators were appointed by the court. They were the widow, Rachel Salomon, Thomas Fitzgerald, Joseph Carson, Mathew Clarkson and Eleazer Levy. Of these, it subsequently appeared, Fitzgerald and Carson were, for small sums, creditors of the estate.

On February 15, 1785, the administrators filed an inventory of the effects and property and in it occurred a table that was in after years to become famous and historic. It showed that Salomon at his death had been possessed of the following Revolutionary securities:

58	Loan Office certificates	$110,233.63
19	Treasury certificates	18,244.88
70	Commissioners' certificates	17,870.37
2	Virginia State certificates	8,166.00
	Continental liquidated dollars	199,214.45
		$353,729.33

It was for the times a right tidy sum; on $353,000 the widow and children, now four in number, could live easily and well.

They did not have a chance to live upon it nor to see it nor any other assets of the estate. In a few months it became apparent that instead of a fortune they were left in a state of bald penury.

The man, supposed to be so rich, was a bankrupt.

How this fact has managed to escape the attention of so many persons that have written about Haym Salomon, I am unable to say. The penury of the family was soon evident, but a story was invented, nobody can now say by whom, that two wicked and designing men, one a former member of Congress and the other a former State officer of Pennsylvania, laid hands upon these $353,000 of securities and carried them off and the distressed family was never again able to come by them.

Nobody carried them off. With all other assets that could be made tractile and merchantable, they went to pay Haym Salomon's debts.

His estate, after his death, suffered a considerable loss from the misadventure of the ship *Sally,*[1] but it is evident that, on the basis of actual values in his possession, he had been virtually insolvent.

[1] Sparks MS.

He had supported the needy members of Congress, advanced money to any public servant that was in want of it, staked Robert Morris, scraped together the funds that had kept the treasury going—and ruined himself. Ruined himself and impoverished his children.

Of this fact, although it is entirely new in the Salomon story, there can be no doubt. The final accounting of the administrators, still among the records of Philadelphia County, tells the story.

He had at the time of his death a bank balance of $135, and he owed $45,000, chiefly at the bank for notes he had endorsed and loans he had made.

But $45,000 from $353,000 still leaves a comfortable balance. Yes; but the $353,000 was only the face value of these securities. Their actual value was a different story. The $199,214 of Continental money, for example, were nominally valued at 40 for 1 and were really worth much less. When they had been estimated at even their nominal value they shrank from $199,214 to $4,980.32. The 58 Loan Office certificates set down as worth $110,233.63 were in reality worth only $6,238. The two Virginia State certificates supposed to be worth $8,166 brought $2,041.

Besides those shown in the famous and historic table before printed, other items of asset were listed —six bonds of different denominations, six protested bills of exchange, £486 in Pennsylvania State money, £10 in New Jersey State money. All of these items underwent a similar shrinkage.

The final account of the administrators was filed

December 23, 1789. It showed total assets of $44,732, a total indebtedness of $45,292 and left the administrators with a deficit of $560, for they had paid debts to that amount in excess of the total assets.

This is the astonishing story but not quite all of it. Under the Pennsylvania law the widow was entitled to the household goods, furniture and personal effects of the deceased. These were of a total value of $1,426 and, with one flimsy addition to be noted hereafter, constituted all that the family ever received from the estate. With this sum the widow and four children were left facing the world. Ezekiel, the eldest child, was not yet seven years old; Deborah was five, Sarah three, and Haym M. was born two weeks before his father's death.

Salomon and his wife had owned jointly some property in New York, the house at No. 22 Wall Street and probably fixtures and furniture in it. This went the way of the rest. Administrators were appointed by the New York court. They found that on February 21, 1784, Salomon and his wife had mortgaged the premises at No. 22 Wall Street to William Rhinelander for $5,600. The mortgage was foreclosed and left a few dollars for the heirs. Jacob Mordecai had a claim against Salomon and Salomon had one against Abraham Skinner, a New York attorney. Vexatious litigation followed about these claims, but the heirs got nothing.

So far as the administrators' account shows, nothing was collected from the scores of men that Salomon had assisted and some of whom he had kept alive. Robert Morris paid into the estate $344 and

no more. Whether he legally owed more will never be ascertained. "It is also proven by the original checks and vouchers," said the Senate Committee, "that Haym Salomon advanced in specie to the Superintendent of Finance $211,678." If this is true, did Robert Morris regard the advances as made to the government and beyond his responsibility? Or were these supposed advances, in point of fact, no more than the proceeds of the sale of bills of exchange that Salomon labored so indefatigably to further? In some ugly litigation that followed Morris's financial downfall damaging charges were made against his character. Charges equally damaging, perhaps even more damaging, were made on the other side. Beyond the ingenuity of mortal man it is to draw any satisfactory conclusion from all this.

But one thing is clear. Haym Salomon produced for Morris a sum of money for those times immense and so again and again warded off an inestimable disaster. We may be sure that not another man on the American side of the struggle could have set forth in cash such a sum or anything like it. Robert Morris, of Willing, Morris and Stanwick, the foremost commercial house in America, he tried it and failed. The romance of business still remains unwritten in America. It has nothing more remarkable than this triumph of a Polish immigrant, nine years in the country, and the price he paid for it. The whole American Revolution seems now to the sober inquiring sense a thing incredible, but even that wild story has no chapter more startling.

As one astute commentator aptly observes, the credit of Haym Salomon seemed greater than the credit of the entire United States.

He produced the money; he delivered it. At the end of August, 1778, he had reached Philadelphia a fugitive and so nearly penniless that he petitioned the government for employment. Less than three years later he was the regular reliance of the poor, haunted Superintendent of Finance, relieving with timely advances a situation that had become more than merely threatening.

He played the fairy godfather in the drama; he came in the nick of time to avert disaster.

Men turned to him for financial wisdom as for financial support.

He was the purser of all these statesmen, native and foreign.

As to the fountain of the wealth he dispensed with such generosity, he had this unusual equipment both of facility and of knowledge and he gave it to his new country with the same spirit that Armand and Lafayette gave their knowledge of war and their courage on the battle-field.

Yet admitting that he was a kind of commercial captain, a born business commander and tactician, any man that in America from 1778 to 1782 could begin with nothing and win by his own efforts and operations in a city of thirty thousand inhabitants, so high a place in the competitive world, seems like a historic commercial phenomenon. We are to remember also, that however the money was had the method was above question. There was no sharp

practice. Everybody that spoke of Haym Salomon spoke with respect for his probity.

A committee of Congress [1] suggested as a part explanation of the mystery that as Salomon was virtually the paymaster-general of the French army and chief broker to the French government, his legitimate commission on these transactions would have supplied him with a certain amount of money to devote to the cause of the Republic. This is enough until we learn that he handled these moneys either for nothing or on a merely nominal commission, and chiefly for nothing.

The only solution of what is left of the problem I can see is that it was not always Salomon alone that responded to the needs of the government. He had the help and support of some of his fellow religionists that shared his convictions about the nature and significance of the struggle.

We have collateral evidence that this is so. In his valuable history of the Jews in Philadelphia, Henry Samuel Morais reminds us that Aaron Levy as well as Salomon "lent extravagantly large sums toward the cause of the American colonists. But it was Salomon who deserves a golden page in the history of the United States, for his means and his services were at the disposal of the government."

The same fact of Jewish cooperation is reflected in one of the few and scant stories that tradition preserves of him. It is to the effect that one night when the pressure on the Superintendent of Finance had been more than usually hard and Salomon, as was

[1] Thirtieth Congress, House of Representatives, Report 504.

his habit, had charged himself with the task of relieving it, he was in the synagogue where with other Jews he had come to observe one of the most solemn festivals of his church. The impatient messenger from Morris summoned him from his very prayers. When he had learned the urgency of the situation he went back, beckoned his fellow worshipers, one after another, and asked their help.

"But it's Yom Kippur," said one devout and worthy man, much shocked.

"But it's the Cause!" snapped back Salomon, holding on tenaciously, and would not let go until the required sum had been made up and the next day he could come again bearing peace to the superintendent.

He died without formulating any claims for reimbursement for the sums he had advanced. In the opinion of later investigators he had entire confidence that when the government should be established, it would pay its obligations to him.[1]

This is his story and his contribution to the variegated history of Revolution. The lessons of Pulaski and Kosciusko must have sunk deeply into this, their pupil. He might have amended the motto of Paine and made it his own. "To serve liberty is my religion." His doctrine is plain enough; wherever men were fighting for freedom he wanted to be among them and help. It was for this reason that he consorted with the hated Sons of Liberty, twice underwent imprisonment, came within almost speaking

[1] *The Jews in Philadelphia; their History from the earliest settlement to the present time,* p. 23.

distance of the firing squad or the hangman, made his escape by night through a hostile and unknown country and then put to work all his resources of business sagacity and skill to keep the ship of the Republic from piling up on shore.

The statement is not excessive. The fact, it seems to me, that most amazes one turning over now the records of the Revolution is that the Revolutionists ever succeeded in such a preposterous and foolhardy venture. By all human experience and probabilities they should have been annihilated and disgraced. A ship so ill-built, less than half-equipped, less than half-manned, had no right to survive. That it did survive, and kept away from a hundred reefs ready to wreck it, seems now to have been due to these main causes:

1. It lived because men of the MacDougall type, not many in numbers, tremendous in resolution, had, back of all else, a fierce, implacable passion for it.

2. It lived through the character of Washington, his steady courage, unshakable resolution, practical wisdom, transparent integrity.

3. It lived because of the devotion of such men as endured Valley Forge, together with the dash, élan and high spirits of a few commanders like Wayne, Marion and Harry Lee.

4. It lived because there were the French.

5. It lived because of the marvelous good fortune or marvelous skill by which again and again when it seemed beyond all hope in a financial way a timely supply sheered it from the rocks.

Some of these factors we are familiar with. The last has never had adequate attention and yet is a

story as exciting in its way as the others. To understand it we must study the Diary and learn of the financial debacle that for so many months threatened to obliterate all that had been gained by the wisdom and firmness of Washington and the sacrifices of the soldiery. All the time from the middle of 1780 to the beginning of peace negotiations the whole Revolutionary structure was in daily peril of ruin for the lack of a handful of dollars, and at every crisis, as we have seen, the dollars were supplied.

It is not possible to read the Diary and contemplate its array of facts without new respect for the men that in the midst of a hopeless situation hung on and kept their faith and their heads. Once more we may remark that it must have been a feeling of most extraordinary potency that fired them. Some went into the fight and gave their lives, some died in the prisons and prison hulks. Some, like Otis and Henry, gave their gifts of eloquence, some gifts of leadership, some gifts of business. But the impulse, as is to be seen here, was the same in all of them, and so was the service in the end equal.

So far, what men like Salomon gave has been overlooked because the world has elected to acclaim mere military service above everything else. As it is beginning now to perceive that the soldier is only the expression of a national will and that military tactics are of no avail without the financial and organizing abilities that render them possible, investigators are turning with the more wonder and respect to the quiet little man in a corner of the Coffee House that so often and so curiously kept the American Finance Office from falling.

CHAPTER XVII

Congress Comes into the Story

WE are not yet done with this poignant drama of revolution and democracy; there remains a sequel to show us what difficulties, in a great national enginery, may beset justice and what individual wrongs may be unintentionally committed even when the engineers set forth to do right.

It is not perfectly established that republics are in reality less grateful than other forms of human government, although there is a hackneyed adage to this effect. In the case of this remarkable man either fate or the Congress of the United States, or both, worked efficiently on the side of the adage, and no account of Haym Salomon would be tolerable that did not tell the highly instructive story of his name and fame in the national legislature.

A series of singular mishaps fell in upon the Salomon saga, almost from the start. For years his chief assistant, head manager in his business and trusted confidant had been an excellent worthy man of the Scotch persuasion named McCrea. Soon after the death of his employer McCrea, in a fit of despondency or aberration, killed himself.[1] He had known more about the business than any other man

[1] Sparks MS. Also reports of Congressional Committees.

and had been closer to the family. If he had lived he would have been the natural administrator of the estate and protector of its documents.

Mrs. Salomon with her children returned to New York and the help of her relatives.

Of the children, Ezekiel, the eldest, adopted the life mercantile, engaged in foreign trade, had cargoes in the Mediterranean, and when still young was sent to take charge of the branch United States Bank at New Orleans, where he suddenly sickened and died. Of the two daughters, Sallie, the younger, became the wife of Joseph Andrews, and their son, Joseph I. Andrews, married Miriam Nones, of New York, granddaughter of that Benjamin Nones whose services to the American cause were so romantic and once so famous. Thus two of the families most distinguished in the Revolution came to be united. A daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Andrews became Mrs. E. L. Goldbaum of Memphis, Tennessee, and was living there a few years ago.[1]

At last there was left only Haym M. Salomon, the youngest of the four Salomon children. He knew that he had inherited from his father certain claims upon the United States, but so long as he was able to make his own way he did not urge them.

In 1814 befell the next misfortune. The British burned the Capitol at Washington and with it were believed on good authority to have been destroyed government records that would have verified details of the transactions with Haym Salomon. Documents to establish many of them were still in the hands of

[1] Footnote to the biographical sketch by Professor Adams.

the son; it was the government's side that was left blank. Some question exists about this. In 1827 Joseph Nourse, who had been many years the Registrar of the Treasury, wrote to Haym M. Salomon:

"I have cast back to those periods when your honored father was agent of the Office of Finance, but the inroads of the British army in 1814 deprived us of every record in relation to the vouchers of the period to which I refer."

This seems clear enough, but it is challenged because the official report of the Treasury Department for 1814 says that the loss of papers in the department caused by the burning of the Capitol was insignificant. Nourse was registrar at the time and reported that the loss of books and papers in his division was "limited to those of minor importance." It appears, however, from his further account of these papers that they might have contained the proofs of the Salomon claim that were afterward sought in vain.

At the time Nourse wrote that these papers had been destroyed, Haym M. Salomon was beginning to make inquiries about the interesting records he had found in whole or in part in his father's old desk. Among them were many receipts from James Madison, then living in retirement at Montpelier. He wrote to Madison inquiring about these papers. One paragraph from Madison's reply has been quoted in Congress:

> The transactions shown by the papers you enclose were for the support of the delegates in Congress and the agency of your

father therein was solicited because of the respect and confidence he enjoyed among those that were acquainted with him.[1]

Which was an excellent tribute to the memory of a good man but hardly definitive. Yet it is reasonably certain that Madison, at least, liquidated all his indebtedness to Salomon when he came into possession of his own funds. He added to his genial tribute the hope that the money due from the government to the Salomon estate would quickly be paid. He would have been much astonished if he could have foreseen the shadow dance that ensued over these obligations.

For the next twelve years the son allowed the matter to rest in default. It is to be surmised that he had some reluctance to urge his claim however just it might seem to him. In a worldly way, all did not go well with him; he had need of the recompense he believed his father to have earned. In January, 1843, he obtained a letter of introduction to President John Tyler from William C. Rives, afterward American Minister to France. Mr. Rives said:

> I beg to present to you Mr. H. M. Salomon, who has such imposing testimonials to his own meritorious character, as well as of the important services rendered by his father to the holy cause of our revolutionary struggle, that it is but an act of justice to invite your favorable consideration.[2]

H. M. Salomon left with President Tyler a package of papers supporting his narrative. Afterward

[1] Thirty-seventh Congress, Senate Report No. 63. There is a slightly different version of this passage in Senate Report to the Thirty-first Congress. The difference is unimportant. It is likely that neither committee had the original document before it.

[2] Thirty-first Congress, First Session, Senate Report No. 177.

when he desired to have these returned to him he was never able to recover them. N. M. Miller, at that time assistant postmaster-general wrote to him in response to his appeals that a large box belonging to President Tyler had been lost and added: "I am apprehensive your papers were in that box; I regret much my inability to procure your papers." [1]

In 1846, Haym M. Salomon being then sixty-one and having met with more reverses, applied to Congress for a part of the money believed to be due to the estate. He did not ask for interest nor for any sums advanced to Morris and others, but only for a liquidation of part of what he might have asked for.

The matter came up before the Committee on Revolutionary Claims of the Senate of the Twenty-ninth Congress, when the committee unanimously adopted a report endorsing the claim and urging that it be paid.

This report came too late to be presented before the end of the session.

At the second session, the committee reverted to the claim and made another report on it that said:

> That it appears from documentary evidence submitted by the memorialist that Haym Salomon, his father, contributed largely of his pecuniary means toward carrying on the war of the Revolution, aiding the public treasury by frequent loans of moneys and advancing liberally of his means to sustain many of the public men engaged in the struggle for independence at a time when the sinews of war were essential to success. It further appears to be satisfactorily established that the confidence of Mr. Salomon was so great in the good faith of the government

[1] Thirty-first Congress, First Session, Senate Report No. 177.

that he parted with his money relying on that good faith for its return.[1]

Another and later committee concluded after considering all the facts that this was a case "where Congress can mark its sense of such service, without injury to the public treasury, by a suitable indemnity to the heirs of one who was a benefactor and whose family of infant children was left in penury by his devotion to the Revolutionary war and his confidence in the good faith of his country."

The confidence was not justified so far as the Twenty-ninth Congress was concerned. The Senate received the report and recommendation and never allowed the indemnity.

Before the next Congress, the Thirtieth, the claim was renewed and on April 26, 1848, Representative Tallmadge, of New York, on behalf of the House Committee on Revolutionary Claims presented a report of endorsement without reservation.

Declaring that it had fully examined the mass of documentary evidence submitted by Haym M. Salomon and regarding it as sufficiently establishing his contention, the committee said:

From the evidence in possession of this committee, the patriotic devotion of Haym Salomon to the cause of American independence cannot, in their judgment, be questioned. The proof of his eminent character and standing as a merchant is very clear and abundant. He was the countryman and intimate associate of Pulaski and Kosciusko and from evidence submitted to the committee it has been fully demonstrated that in the depth and sincerity of his devotion to the cause of human liberty he was

[1] Cited in Senate Report No. 127, Thirty-sixth Congress, First Session.

not surpassed by either of these illustrious men. For some time antecedent to the outbreak of the Revolutionary War, Mr. Salomon had resided in this country, and had established that high character for probity and self-sacrificing patriotism which appears ever to have distinguished him. . . . It is established beyond doubt that Mr. Madison and his compatriots, Randolph, Jones and others, were for a considerable period dependent for the means of existence upon Mr. Salomon; evidence of this is contained in the index appended to this report. . . . Abundant proof is presented, in the judgment of the committee, that Mr. Salomon rendered the most essential aid to the cause of the Revolution and that the discharge of the obligation on the part of the United States should not be longer delayed.

It appears that Haym M. Salomon now asked for a grant of public land in lieu of money compensation. The committee accordingly reported a bill making this grant.

At about the same time the claim was presented to the Senate Committee of the Thirtieth Congress, but seems to have been unaccompanied there by the testimony that had been offered to the House Committee. I do not know why this should have been, but it is the apparent fact. On July 28 the Senate Committee, Senator Bright chairman, returned a report pointing out the defects in the testimony offered and on that ground denying the petition. "Without intending to decide on the general merits of the claim," said the committee, it found that it could not be justified in supporting it, "in the present condition of the testimony as it appears on file." [1]

The lesson was well heeded. Before the next Con-

[1] Thirtieth Congress, First Session, Senate Report No. 219.

gress, the Thirty-first, the claim was offered again to the Senate with the full mass of testimony, and the Committee on Revolutionary Claims, with Senator Walker as chairman, made a thorough investigation of the whole story, and its verdict presented on August 9, 1850, seems authoritative, full and final. It goes minutely into the transactions with Haym Salomon, so far as they could be ascertained, and here are its conclusions:

> It was [in] a crisis like this that Mr. Salomon aided the government and members of Congress without any security, trusting in the honor of the American people when independence should have been secured.
>
> The committee, from the evidence before them, are induced to consider Haym Salomon as one of the truest and most efficient friends of the country in a very critical period of its history and when its pecuniary resources were few and its difficulties many and pressing. He seems to have trusted implicitly to the national honor; and the committee are of the opinion that, as in the case of Lafayette and others, the nation ought to be liberal in their indemnity to a son of an early benefactor in the day of its prosperity.
>
> Abundant proof is presented that Haym Salomon rendered very essential aid to the cause of the revolution, and that he did so, judging by so many of his acts, disinterestedly and from a sincere and ardent love of human freedom.
>
> The memorialist . . . asks for an indemnity commensurate with his claim and being satisfied of its justice, and desirous that he should be indemnified, the committee reports the accompanying bill, which is similar in amount to the bills reported by the House and Senate committees during the Twenty-ninth and Thirtieth Congresses.

It was offered but never passed.

There seemed to hang over the story some per-

sistence of evil destiny. Usually the committee reports cited the Revolutionary securities found in Salomon's effects when he died as some part of the claim against the government. That is to say, the table already familiar to us:

58	Loan Office certificates	$110,233.63
19	Treasury certificates	18,244.88
2	Virginia State certificates	8,166.00
70	Commissioners' certificates	17,870.37
	Continental liquidated dollars	199,214.45
		$353,729.33

But of course if this were advanced as a legal claim it was without basis. All these securities had gone long before to pay Salomon's debts. A certain moral claim there was, of strength and reason, because the debts had been incurred in support of the nation, the securities had been sacrificed to the debts at a time when these securities were at a low price, soon afterward their price was considerably increased. The price at which they were turned in was that which prevailed in the dark days of the struggle; the price they attained afterward was that which resulted from the establishment of the Union and the passing of the validation act of 1790. Because these securities were delivered to the creditors the heirs were left penniless. For so good a soldier of the cause the nation might well have made a liberal appropriation.

But the strange thing is that the committees continued to view the Revolutionary securities as valid and to stress them as part of the just and legal

indebtedness of the United States to the Salomon heirs. Not only so, but these phantom collaterals have passed thus into history and become inextricably mixed with the whole story to its detriment in the eyes of the judicious. Every person that has written about Haym Salomon has reprinted the table of the Revolutionary securities, usually citing it with wise saws as an example of republican ingratitude that these certificates and the rest had not been made good. Innumerable newspaper and magazine articles, books and speeches have repeated the statement. Yet the facts about the securities are plainly set forth in the final accounts of the administrators, where they are traced straight into the vaults of the Bank of North America.

But this is not all. One of the committees fortified the table with this certificate:

> I certify that the above writing is a true extract from the original inventory and appraisement of the personal estate of Haym Salomon, deceased, filed in the register's office, Philadelphia, on the 15th February, 1785.
>
> JOHN GEYER, *Register.*
>
> *Given under my hand and seal of office this 28th May, 1825.*

It seems like some form of impish bedevilment when we learn that in spite of Register Geyer's confident assertion, "the above writing" was not a true extract from the original inventory and appraisement. The inventory does not mention "Continental liquidated dollars" but has this significant line:

> Continental money, $199,214.45 liquidated at 40 for 1, $4,980.32.

Moreover, the inventory contains items not included in the above list, such as Pennsylvania and New Jersey money, and in the form repeatedly used in the committee's reports the item "19 Treasury certificates," is $15 out of the way; the amount should be $18,259.50 instead of $18,244.88

No one seems to have noticed these discrepancies. It is clear that Haym M. Salomon never suspected them. He had taken at its face value the story of the two men in buckram that made off with the $353,729 worth of certificates. At the time the administrators filed their final report he was only five years old. When he grew up he learned about the inventory and the supposed loss of the securities but was never in a position to know the last chapter of that story. The lesion is more technical than important. If the government did not legally owe one sum it morally owed another, and Haym M. Salomon was justified in asking for some recognition.

He did not have it, and the case relapsed into the handy oblivion that usually waits upon these worthy efforts.

For ten years it rested thus. In 1860, Mr. Haym M. Salomon being then old, infirm and in need, made another application to Congress for some adjustment of his claim. This petition was referred to the Committee on Revolutionary Claims of the Senate which dug into the story even more deeply than any of its predecessors. It discovered that instead of owing Haym Salomon $353,729.33, as represented, the government owed him nearly $800,000 of principal to say nothing of interest. It discovered items in the account that had never been observed before.

It found notes of Robert Morris, or evidence of them, and the more than $200,000 that Salomon had advanced from time to time to the haunted and hunted superintendent. It also came upon the six promissory notes of Haym Salomon to M. Hillegas, Continental treasurer, aggregating 34,759 pounds, 11 shillings and 2 pence, Pennsylvania currency, equal to $92,600 Federal money.

It went back and dug from the testimony taken by the Senate Committee of 1850, statements not before made public that were rich placer deposits of fact. In 1850 the committee had questioned J. Hockley, cashier of the Bank of North America, which was still in existence, and obtained from him conclusive information verifying the entries in the accounts of Haym Salomon and Robert Morris, proving the transactions before narrated by which Salomon so often rescued Morris from irretrievable disaster. A natural question that arose was whether by any possibility the administrators or any of the heirs of the estate might have collected the claims in whole or in part.

To settle this matter the committee addressed to the First Auditor of the Treasury a letter containing four explicit questions covering every possible chance of payment and requesting an answer equally explicit. To this T. L. Smith, then First Auditor of the Treasury, responded on March 25, 1850, that after the most careful search of the ten thousand pages of records of payments in his office since the beginning of the government he could state that there was not the slightest evidence of any of these payments having been made to any person.

Other items of equal interest were uncovered and the 1860 committee found that "the claim of the memorialist is one of peculiar and decided merit, and such as to demand the most favorable consideration of Congress." It therefore reported a bill for the granting of the indemnity asked by Haym M. Salomon, adding this comment:

> 22. Your committee feel it their duty to remark that the memorialist is far advanced in life, that he has sought his rights with equal patience and diligence, and that any farther unnecessary delay would be ungrateful, if not a denial of justice.

The plea went unheeded. The bill was never passed.

Two years later, 1862, Thirty-seventh Congress, Second Session, the case came up again, and was referred to the Committee on Revolutionary Claims, which on July 2, 1862, through Senator Wilkinson, made a report declaring that the "claim of the memorialist is of undeniable merit."

It made a new compilation of the sums owing as thus:

Government obligations of the various species before stated	$353,729.33
Specie advanced at various times to Superintendent of Finance	211,678.00
Six promissory notes to Hillegas	92,600.00
	$658,007.33

This has ever since been accepted as an authoritative statement of a just claim. The fact is enough to support a belief that certain passages in human

affairs are bewitched or evilly spelled. Viewed as a legal claim the compilation was preposterous. The United States, legally speaking, owed no such sum. The famous and immortal item of $353,729.33 of Continental obligations we have before disposed of. There is no evidence now that the $211,678 advanced to Morris represented anything other than Salomon's brilliant success in selling bills of exchange. But the notes to Hillegas may be viewed as having a different basis; with interest they would have made a considerable amount and one that might with justice be considered as legal.[1] It is remarkable that this was never urged and still more remarkable that such items as Salomon's advances to Don Rendon and to the starving delegates, about which there was no possible question, were omitted entirely from this computation.

In the meantime, a fresh disaster had overtaken the claim. It had been before the Thirty-sixth Congress and the papers relating to it had remained in the archives of the Capitol. The package of vouchers and receipts from the delegates and others that Salomon had supported was among them. Such another collection of eminent names was not to be found elsewhere in America. The autographs of Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, Mifflin, Steuben, Wilson, so many generals and statesmen, signed to evidence of debt—an unbelievable treasure trove! The fame of it must have reached to the autograph hunters or they knew of it by the peculiar wondrous sixth-faculty sense

[1] Thirty-sixth Congress, First Session, Senate Report No. 127, fifth finding. But the item was approved by each succeeding committee and seems to be unchallenged.

that the trade of collecting is said to develop. In any event, they discovered the precious package and rifled it, and when Congress came next to consider of the matter these evidences too had disappeared, nor could the committee ever discover who had pilfered them. Where they are now is a mystery; scattered to the ends of the earth, probably. The fact that they had existed, had been fingered and examined by many committees remained beyond dispute; the physical proof of them had vanished. "But sufficient of their contents," said the Committee of the Thirty-seventh Congress, "has been preserved in the former reports to show their accuracy, and the importance of the relief granted to those who devoted their whole time to the service."

It is to be noted that the spirit of the Salomons persisted in the aged petitioner. He was now seventy-eight, his need was great, but the country was plunged in civil war, the demands upon the treasury were enormous, and he expressly stated that in view of the difficulties of the country he voluntarily relinquished to it all of his claims except $100,000. The report concluded:

> Your committee, in view of all the facts, and considering that his demand is just and reasonable, report the accompanying bill for the relief of the memorialist, limiting the amount to $100,000; which is in reality but a small portion of what is justly due him, but which he is willing to take in view of his advanced years and the condition of the country.

The bill was presented. It was never passed.

Two years later the case came again before Congress and on June 24, 1864, the Senate Committee

PROPOSED STATUE OF HAYM SALOMON
To be erected in New York

on Revolutionary Claims delivered a report,[1] endorsing the findings of its predecessors, declaring the claim to be just and unassailable and presenting a bill for its payment.

The bill was not passed; the claim was not paid.

Mr. Haym M. Salomon died without having seen one cent of the money he had so patiently awaited and for thirty years the whole affair slept like the dust of Pharaoh.

It was revived before the Fifty-second Congress, Second Session, 1893. By this time the heirs of a patriot whose services had been performed one hundred and twelve years before had given up any hope or desire of money compensation. The claim, if interest had been allowed upon it from only the time Congress first declared it to be just and true, would now be of an imposing size. The heirs declared that they had no wish to collect principal or interest.

What did they wish then?

That the services of their ancestor might be commemorated with a medal. Simply this and nothing more. For a medal they would abandon all these claims, call the account even and cancel it.

Did they get the medal?

Before the Committee of the Whole on the State of the Union, Mr. Cummings of the Committee on the Library, to which the medal matter had been referred, reported that the request be granted. He appended to the report a summary of the actions taken by so many other committees over so long a lapse of time, recounted the services of Haym Salo-

[1] Thirty-eighth Congress, First Session, Senate Report No. 93.

mon, recalled how he had given his all to the cause of the Republic and presented a bill appropriating $250 to pay for a medal to be struck at the Philadelphia mint "and that the same be presented to the lineal descendant and heir of the late Haym Salomon."

The bill was never passed, the medal was not struck. The lineal heir and descendant died without even this recognition of his grandfather's patriotism.

In 1911 many persons interested in this painful story thought that further appeals to Congress would be futile and started a movement to found at Washington a Haym Salomon university as the most fitting memorial to this good man. Woodrow Wilson, Governor Dix of New York, Louis Marshall and other well-known citizens were on the committee. President Taft endorsed the project. The war came on and this too went the way of other suggestions.

On February 6, 1925, Representative Charles A. Mooney of Ohio introduced a bill to appropriate $50,000 to erect in Washington a statue of Haym Salomon and appointing a committee to supervise it,

The bill was never passed; the statue was never erected.

There was destined to be in the Senate Chamber, one more echo of Haym Salomon and his services. After all these futile attempts to wrest from an inattentive national legislature some recognition of a life so serviceable to the Republic, on December 17, 1926, Sixty-ninth Congress, Senator McKellar moved to make a public document of the reports of the Senate Committee of the Thirty-eighth Congress,

a biographical sketch of Haym Salomon written by Professor Herbert B. Adams of Johns Hopkins University and some other material. The Senate was good enough to agree, and with this gesture the heirs of Haym Salomon were left to be content.[1]

They had received no money and no medal, but they had a nice document that they could send to their friends.

For eighty years Congress had been petitioned to do some measure of justice and this was the net result.

Until the year in which this is written, 1930, the labors and sacrifices of the man that saved the Revolution remained uncommemorated. Then some of his admirers and coreligionists combined to erect in his memory a monument that seems long delayed.

But the truest monument to Haym Salomon is the imperishable results of his labors. If he had done no more than to keep James Madison and James Wilson in public life he would have marked American history indelibly, if unostentatiously, for these men were among its makers and directors. If he had done no more than to keep Robert Morris solvent and the credit of the United States from ruin that would have been enough, for if the Revolution had collapsed when it was most beset in 1781 there would have been no United States. But he did even more. He testified to the world that Americanism is not a matter of so-called race or birthplace or descent but of faith and faith alone. Its truest exponents might be born anywhere and still be its indubitable sons.

[1] Sixty-ninth Congress, Second Session, Senate Document No. 178.

To the philosophical he presents a study of surpassing interest. After all these years of searchings into every available nook and corner of his history, it appears that, however incredulous we may be about such things as not being in the nature of man, we have here one that acted a great part in a moving drama of history and still without self-consciousness. No reward of glory or eminence or praise or position waited upon his part and, so far as we can discover now, he considered them not at all. He wore no uniform, clanked no sword, bore no title and had no acclaim as he went through the streets. He was never a member of Congress; from the rights and privileges of other citizens he was, even in liberal Pennsylvania, largely debarred. But beyond any doubt, he toiled like a man on a treadmill and gave all his possessions for the thing he believed in. We know that rare and high spirits in this world find in service something that exceeds in value all applause or fortune. This man seems of that order.

Something might be said in another direction. By proving with such fortitude and sacrifices the immanent and unconquerable devotion of his people to the cause of liberty wherever it might appear, he helped to break down an absurd and footless prejudice long dividing sons of men that otherwise are essentially one. He may be hailed therefore as a pioneer of a broader cause, the cause of the universal fellowship. Pioneer he was, and, remembering the manner and occasion of his so early passing, as much a martyr as if he had given up his life on a battle-field.

APPENDICES

A. The Petition for Political Justice to the Jews that Haym Salomon Signed

(From the "Freeman's Journal," Philadelphia, Jan. 21, 1784)

December 23, 1783.

To the honourable the COUNCIL of CENSORS, assembled agreeable to the Constitution of the State of Pennsylvania. The Memorial of Rabbi Ger. Seixas of the Synagogue of the Jews at Philadelphia, Simon Nathan their Parnass or President, Asher Myers, Bernard Gratz and Haym Salomon the Mahamad, or Associates of their council in behalf of themselves and their brethren Jews, residing in Pennsylvania,

Most respectfully showeth,

That by the tenth section of the Frame of Government of this Commonwealth, it is ordered that each member of the general assembly of representatives of the freemen of Pennsylvania, before he takes his seat, shall make and subscribe a declaration, which ends in these words, "I do acknowledge the Scriptures of the old and new Testament to be given by divine inspiration," to which is added an assurance, that "no further or other religious test shall ever hereafter be required of any civil officer or magistrate in this state."

Your memorialists beg leave to observe, that this clause seems to limit the civil rights of your citizens to one very special article of the creed; whereas by the second paragraph of the declaration of the rights of the inhabitants, it is asserted without any other limitation than the professing the existence of God, in plain words, "that no man who acknowledges the being of a God can be justly deprived or abridged of any civil rights as a citizen on account of his religious sentiments." But certainly this religious test deprives the Jews of the most eminent rights of

freemen, solemnly ascertained to all men who are not professed Atheists.

May it please your Honors,

Although the Jews in Pennsylvania are but few in number, yet liberty of the people in one country, and the declaration of the government thereof, that these liberties are the rights of the people, may prove a powerful attractive to men, who live under restraints in another country. Holland and England have made valuable acquisitions of men, who, for their religious sentiments, were distressed in their own countries.—And if Jews in Europe or elsewhere, should incline to transport themselves to America, and would, for reason of some certain advantage of the soil, climate, or the trade of Pennsylvania, rather become inhabitants thereof, than of any other State; yet the disability of Jews to take seat among the representatives of the people, as worded by the said religious test, might determine their free choice to go to New York, or to any other of the United States of America, where there is no such like restraint laid upon the nation and religion of the Jews, as in Pennsylvania.—Your memorialists cannot say that the Jews are particularly fond of being representatives of the people in assembly or civil officers and magistrates in the State; but with great submission they apprehend that a clause in the constitution, which disables them to be elected by their fellow citizens to represent them in assembly, is a stigma upon their nation and their religion, and it is inconsonant with the second paragraph of the said bill of rights; otherwise Jews are as fond of liberty as their religious societies can be, and it must create in them a displeasure, when they perceive that for their professed dissent to doctrine, which is inconsistent with their religious sentiments, they should be excluded from the most important and honourable part of the rights of a free citizen.

Your memorialists beg farther leave to represent, that in the religious books of the Jews, which are or may be in every man's hands, there are no such doctrines or principles established as are inconsistent with the safety and happiness of the people of Pennsylvania, and that the conduct and behaviour of the Jews in this and the neighbouring States, has always tallied with

the great design of the Revolution; that the Jews of Charlestown, New York, New-Port and other posts, occupied by the British troops, have distinguishedly suffered for their attachment to the Revolution principles; and their brethren at St. Eustatius, for the same cause, experienced the most severe resentments of the British commanders. The Jews of Pennsylvania in proportion to the number of their members, can count with any religious society whatsoever, the Whigs among either of them; they have served some of them in the Continental army; some went out in the militia to fight the common enemy; all of them have cheerfully contributed to the support of the militia, and of the government of this State; they have no inconsiderable property in lands and tenements, but particularly in the way of trade, some more, some less, for which they pay taxes; they have, upon every plan formed for public utility, been forward to contribute as much as their circumstances would admit of; and as a nation or a religious society, they stand unimpeached of any matter whatsoever, against the safety and happiness of the people.

And your memorialists humbly pray, that if your honours, from any other consideration than the subject of this address, should think proper to call a convention for revising the constitution, you would be pleased to recommend this to the notice of that convention.

Comment by the "Freeman's Journal":

"The above was read and ordered to lie on the table.

"A correspondent says, that he could wish, as a friend to the State of Pennsylvania, and as a friend to Christianity, that the religious test that should be required before the admission to any office whatever in the commonwealth, were, what the declaration of rights avows to be sufficient, simply this 'I believe in one God, the creator and governor of the universe, the rewarder of the good and the punisher of the wicked.'

"He conceives that this abridgment of our religious test would be attended with the most beneficial consequences. It would benefit the State, by inviting hither a great number of Jews,

who for their wealth, their information, and their attachment to the cause of liberty, might be of extensive and permanent service. It would tend to the propagation of Christianity, by impressing the minds of the Jews, from this generous treatment; with sentiments in favour of the gospel.

"Our correspondent says, that we should consider that the Jews were once the darling people of the Almighty, that he 'bore them on eagle's wings,' and that the sacred prophecies declare, he will again bless them after an appointed time of affliction. He says, that it would become the true disciples of Christ, to reflect upon what the Redeemer of Mankind uttered when he was extended on the cross, 'Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.'"

B. Samples of Salomon's Letters

Philadelphia, 20 June 1783.

Mr. Philip Moses
Charlestown, So. Carolina.
Dr. Couzen

I expectd ere now you would have honoured me with a line if it was only to assure me of your safe arrival and welfare which I have heard with pleasure from other people but could have been much more pleasing to have been assured of it from your self. Inclosed have sent you the copys of Sundry letters from my parents & am afraid I would wrong your friendship was I not convinced that you'll share with me the Joy I feel in hearing from my parents after so long an absence, A Joy more easily conceived than expressed & in relieving them in their indigent Circumstances which by God's blessing I hope to enable them to live above want for the future. By the inclosed you'll Perceive that we are Related to one another which acc't is so Satisfactory that there is no reason to doubt the authenticity of it And any Commission that you may have this way will execute them with double pleasure, as my being related enhances the friendship I always Entertained for you & in expectation of a Speedy Answer I subscribe myself

Your friend & humble Servant

To Mr. William Vanderlockt

(*Not dated—probably June 7, 1783*)

Sir:

Your favor of the 1st instant I have rec'd inclosing a draft on Jno. Holker esquire for 200 dollars which has been accepted. Am Exceedingly Sorry to hear of your Illness but have since heard to my inexpressible joy that you are likely to recover which may be the case is the Sincere wish of your obedient & very humble servant.

N.B. You may remember that you Indorsed Some time ago a note of Charles Erdmans for 225 Dollars which note was given me and put in the Bank but was not Honoured by Mr. Erdman when due But would not make any disturbance on acc't of your name being on it. I therefore beg you will let me know what to do & if you have no objection will sue him tho he has promised to pay it when he Gets money tho only look upon that as an excuse to retard the payment of it.

Philad'a 20 June 1783

Mr. C. Polack
Carolinia

Sir

I find by your long silence that my Idea is quite obliterated from your Remebrance or else you would not have forgot a friend who should always be happy to hear of your welfare Last week arrived a Mr. Pollack from Cape Francis who lodges at Mr. Jacobs & If I have any penetration he would willingly become your Rival and asure you he would be no despicable one if Money can recommend him but as to anything else he is a second Mose Nathan. Beg you will write me first oportunity & Rest assured you may command anything that is in the Power of

Your Obe't Serv't

C. The Bills of Exchange

Specimens from Robert Morris's Letter Book in the Library of Congress

Office of Finance 8th April 1782.

Mr. Haym Salomon,
Sir,

You are to deliver unto Michael Hilligas Esq^{r} Treasurer of the United States all the Notes which you have received from the Persons to whom you sold the Bills No. 1 to 42 amounting to L^{vr} 500.000. sold for £ 34.758″18-2. Pennsylvania Currency agreable to the List of said Notes annexed hereto, you are to receive in Return Mr. Hilligas's duplicate Receipts specifying the Notes and Sums one of which receipts upon being produced to and deposited with Joseph Nourse Esq^{r} Register of the Treasury will acquit you of this Claim, the other you may keep for your own Satisfaction and Security. You will render a separate Account of your Brokerage to Mr. Milligan the Comptroller and on his Certificate I will grant you a Warrant for the Amount.

I am Sir

Your humble Servant
RM

Michael Hillegas Esqr.

Office of Finance 8th April 1782.

Sir.

You have herewith Enclosed my Order to Mr. Haym Salomon, to deliver you the sundry notes therein specifyed amounting to £34.758.18.2 Pennsylvania Currency being the Property of the United States received for Bills which I have drawn on Mr. Grand, Banker in Paris, you will give to Mr. Salomon such Receipts as mentioned in my Letter to him on which you will be charged in the Public Books for the amount, and as I shall have immediate occasion to Grant Warrants on you for the Cur-

rent Expenditures of the United States you are hereby authorized to deposit these Notes with the Bank upon the customary Discount and the amount of the said Discount being duly certified must be admitted to your Credit and as a contingent charge on this Transaction.

I am Sir

Your most obedient
and
humble Servant
RM

Register of the Treasury

Office of Finance 8th April 1782.

Sir,

You will receive herewith the Account Sales of forty two Setts of Exchange drawn by the Superintendent of Finance upon Mons^{r} Grand Banker in Paris No. 1 to 42. amounting to five hundred thousand Libres Tournois these Bills were put into the Hands of Haym Salomon Broker who sold them with my Concurrence to Sundry Persons in this City on thirty sixty and ninety days Credit, he has the notes of the Persons to whom they were sold amounting in the whole to thirty four thousand seven hundred and fifty eight pounds eighteen Shillings and two pence Pennsylvania Currency equal to 92.690 Dollars and 38/90th. You will be pleased to charge Haym Salomon for this Amount and Credit Mons. Grand in a french account Current for the same—and when Mr. Salomon shall produce to you a Receipt of Michael Hillegas Esqr. for the notes above mentioned you will then charge Mr. Hilligas for the amount of those notes crediting Mr. Salomon for the same. Salomon will bring in an Account for his Brokerage seperate for Amount of which I shall give him a warrant on the Treasurer Mr. Hilligas will also have to discount the Notes at the Bank but the Brokerage and discount may be placed to Account of Contingent Expences whenever the Amount is duly ascertained.

I am Sir

You most obedient Servent
RM

Michael Hillegas Esqr.

Office of Finance 26 April 1782.

Sir,

You will receive enclosed herewith a Note of Hand signed by Henry Hill Esq^{r} promising to pay to my Order six thousand seven hundred and fifty Pounds Pennsylvania Currency equal to eighteen thousand Dollars which I have endorsed payable to you or your Order on account of the United States. Mr. Haym Salomon Broker will deliver you Notes or pay you money from Time to Time on account of Bills with which he is supplied by me on Publick Account and this note of Mr. Hills is in part Payment for such Bills so that you will include the amount thereof in your Receipts to Mr. Salomon as he will be charged for the gross Amount of all the Bills sold and in Case the money be wanted for the discharge of my Warrants before the Notes fall due you are hereby authorized to discount the whole or any Part thereof.

I am Sir

Your most obedient and humble Servant

RM

Michael Hillegas Esq.

Office of Finance 9th May 1782.

Sir,

You will receive enclosed herewith a note of Hand signed by Mr. George Eddy promising to Pay to my Order six thousand five hundred pounds Pennsylvania Currency equal to seventeen thousand three hundred and thirty three Dollars and one third of a Dollar which I have endorsed payable to you or your Order on Account of the United States. You will therefore credit Mr. Haym Salomon with the Amount and include it in your Receipts to him. As it is probable the money may be wanted before it becomes due you are hereby authorized to discount it at the Bank.

I am Sir

Your most obedient and humble Servant

RM

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